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# **URBAN IMAGE AND OTHERNESS**

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An Investigation Through Practice of Installation Art

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of  
University of the Arts London  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Art  
Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design August 2004

This research examines the hypothesis that installation art:

- is not a medium but a mode of address, addressing the world as a multiplicity;
- uses tactics of 'dispersal', which as perceptual gesture is in affinity with notions of multiplicity.

The explanatory framework, which legitimates 'dispersal' as installation's defining tactic, is introduced step by step, through the articulation of certain concepts such as: 'field of activities' (Kaye, 2000), 'intervening screen', (Deleuze, 1968), 'dilation' (Ahearne, 1995), 'afterwardness' (Laplanche, 1992), 'the knowing not to know' (Derrida, 1992), 'emotion-value' (Barthes, 1977) and 'autopoetics closure' (Luhmann, 2000).

Structured by this framework, the practice for this research addresses, on one hand, the concept of otherness – understood as the infinite learning of 'differential truths' (Ahearne, 1995, p.192) and on the other hand, a notion of urban image – understood as fragmentary imagery able to accommodate a sense of public space over imprints of experienced time. From the analysis of this practice the research concludes that:

- the employment of 'dispersal' as a defining tactic allows the work to surface into visibility as a sharing of a system of relevance;
- this sharing aims to displace meaning, by pushing it away from an autonomous condition, located on the work's surface;
- meaning, when presented as a sharing of a system of relevance, is relocated throughout different 'levels of immersion' inside the work;
- from this new positioning, meaning will only be retrieved by the work-in-situ of a particular viewer's reading;
- this condition of random retrieval implies that the work will generate meaning as 'differential truth' (Ahearne, 1995, p.192), which exists outside 'the disease of identity' (Certeau, 1969, p.179);
- as 'differential truth', meaning becomes a function, not of the authority of a specific voice, but of the ability to respond [a response-ability], exercised by the maker in facing the world, and by the viewer in the face of the work.

## Acknowledgements

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Writing proliferates in the vicinity of the break that vibrates in the nothing of the work. It is an 'island/inscription', a *Locsu solus*, a 'penal colony', a dream inhabited by the unreadability to which, or of which, it thinks it 'speaks'.

Micheal de Certeau

'You make the work, and the work reads you'

Isaac Julien

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This thesis attempts to enlist the reader as a co-maker in an installation activity. That is, it proposes itself as a performative space to be inhabited by the reader.

Firstly, this proposed space of interaction is induced by treating the printed thesis as a 'thing', whose materiality is divided in three forms of presence in space:

- the twofold binding of the thesis that, as an expanded format, demands the allocation of a specific site for the reading. This reading then becomes an action in space which generates a new set of gestures, or what I am calling a *gestural*: a set of bodily movements that, either as an action or a reminiscence, will operate as a maker in space and, therefore, will be a carrier of performatic content.
- the inclusion of an *elsewhere* in the visualisation generated by the writing, which is done by bringing a time delay between the reading of the descriptive text on the practice and the viewing of the images that illustrate this text. This forced disassociation of the two modes of referring to the practical work – the verbal description and the photographic documentation – is an attempt to make accessible to the reader as a direct experience, the perceptual disassociation I endured at the time of writing about my own work, that is, the perceptual discomfort I felt while translating in verbal terms the effects and reasons of my practice. Thus, for the securing of a minimum time delay between the reading (of the text) and the viewing (of the images), the illustrations are being presented as



images kept separate in the appendices, and their entrances in the text are being indicated by a symbol and a number, placed at the margins of the pages, as demonstrated nearby;



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- the presentation as a work in itself, and not as a documentation, of the final practice done for this research – namely the Chance Encounters Portfolio , which is included in the main text as a group of installation proposals and in the appendices, as a DVD-disk portfolio. Both formats, the proposals and the portfolio, enlist the reader as a co-maker of a possible visibility for the work. The text of the proposal becomes a co-making by appropriating the reader's imagination as a virtual site for an installation. The portfolio expands this co-making by the means of a double appropriation. Firstly it appropriates, as an added durational element, the reader's gestures when viewing the DVDs. Secondly, as the actual site for the installation, the portfolio appropriates the reader's working space and its furniture – a possible table or desk, a chair, a monitor, a DVD player and some personal objects. The added durational element of the reader's gestural is crucial for the portfolio full effect as a presence in space and not only on screen, that is, for its full effect as an installation work. Ideally, the digital work included in the Chance Encounters Portfolio should be viewed one each day, looping on a large monitor's screen for a certain time, as if were a parallel action, happening alongside the reading of the thesis.

Proposing this thesis as a space of interaction also induced a differentiation in the writing of the text's three sections:

- Putting the Concepts Together is an investigative writing that, for reasons that are made clear from its start, avoids an historical approach to installation art. Alternatively, it uses, as a methodological tool, a non-linear borrowing of concepts from different discourses, as Architectural Theory, Philosophy, Aesthetics and Semiology. This borrowing of concepts, such as 'field of activities' (Kaye, 2000), 'intervening screen', (Deleuze, 1968), 'dilation' (Ahearne, 1995), 'afterwardness' (Laplanche, 1992), 'the knowing not to know' (Derrida, 1992), 'emotion-value' (Barthes, 1977) and 'autopoetics closure' (Luhmann, 2000), is not an attempt to affiliate the outcome of the writing to these interrelated discourses, which are acting as donors. Instead the text is an index of the affiliation between the investigative writing's methodological tool – the borrowing of concepts – and its central proposition, which affirms dispersal as the defining tactics for installation activity;
  
- Putting the Work in Place is a descriptive writing that attempts to demonstrate the existence of a general system of relevance, active throughout my practice of installation art, and which articulates a notion of urban image – understood as fragmentary imagery able to accommodate a sense of public space over imprints of experienced time, and a concept of otherness – understood as the infinite learning of 'differential truths' (Ahearne, 1995 p. 192). By using dispersal as its defining tactics, installation as mode of address is attempting to bring the work in space not as a self-contained object, but as a contextualised system of relevance. Thus, this

descriptive writing, which attempts to demonstrate the articulations of notions and concepts inside a system of relevance, is here acting as a third term and a measuring ground for the adequacy between this research and its practice;

- Closing the Writing and Opening a Conversation is a notational writing that reflects, and still inquiries, on the original contribution offered by this thesis to the studies on installation art, namely, the definition of a new terminology to address installation art, and the indication, implied in the use of such terminology, that installation art reveals the art making to be a field of action producing not a knowledge but, more precisely, a field of action producing a mode of *learning* the world from the world.

INITIAL [Re]MARKS

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I have always liked the ability installation art had to elide definitions for so long...and since I started this research, as well as my own personal experience as a practitioner, I had certain commentaries working in the back of my mind, which, despite being casual introductory remarks, were actually setting up the direction for my journey into the research.

First of all, was the discrepancy observed by Julie Reiss, who noted that '[a]lthough the term 'installation art' has become widely used, it is still relatively non-specific' (Reiss, 1999 p. xiii).

Furthering her argument, Reiss justified the balancing-act between wide acceptance and non-specificity by referring installation's practice to a wide range of other interrelated areas, including Fluxus, Earth art, Minimalism, Video art, Performance, Conceptual art and Process art.

Her evaluation was well informed, but had a frustrating effect on me, as it just reinforced the impression of inconsistency already recognised in the term. At the same time, it added a new layer of confusion to the subject, by apparently endorsing a categorical form of thinking, which implied that belonging to a large genealogical tree from inception would suffice as a guarantee of legibility for installation art.

However, when addressing installation art as a non-specific term, the option for mapping out the genealogies of a History of



Installation Art, though academically tempting, was misleading. Finding a positioning at the confluence of all those practices, is a task that opens up to such a broad panorama, that Hugh Davis (1997), in an attempt to cover the whole spectrum of affiliations, included in the range even the Lascaux and Altamira caves.

Putting on hold such radical time-travelling expeditions, Erica Suderburg rephrased the problem as a guidance for beginners: '[i]n this zone of maximum hybridity, definitions fall flat. It is only at the intersection of practices [...] that a definition can be tentatively constructed to address installation activity [...]' (Suderburg, 2000 p.2).

Suderburg's comment contained an insightful detail, which immediately engaged me – the use of the word 'activity' instead of 'art'. A simple change of words when naming, but it sounded like the finding of a password, reconnecting the idea of installation, as a denomination, with the experience of installation, as a practice.

Another of the initial remarks I was responding to came from Michael Archer (1994), who six years before Suderburg's exhortation, was already tackling the problem as a twofold proposition. Archer was close to the core reminding us that, until that moment and for more than two decades, the term 'installation' had been used to define a kind of art form that 'takes into special account either the relations between its constituent elements or the interaction between the artwork and its context' (Oliveira, N. et al 1994 p. 8).

Archer's was a good starting point from which to proceed towards objectivity. Nevertheless, I must confess to a clandestine hope that

my practice-based research would be able to address installation art's intricacies while preserving the peculiar ability this art making has to produce theoretical bewilderment, again and again.

For a researcher, pledged to the production of a final text, to have such mystifying hopes sounded contradictory, but as a practitioner I had already an understanding of this 'slippery' term – installation – as a tentative denomination related to the opening up *and safeguard* of a radical fluidity in framing and reframing space. That is to say, a term related to a shift in art making that continuously attempts to relocate perception into indeterminacy and deferral.

In keeping with my expectations, I hoped my research would find a way of operating under a paradox – it was a search to clarify a term that must retain a foundational elusiveness. The task implied supporting the claims for 'installation art's intrinsic flexibility'<sup>1</sup>, while protecting this characteristic of openness from the accusation of becoming, as a tactic, 'increasingly meaningless' (Archer, 1996 p. 9).

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<sup>1</sup> Claim made by the MCA - San Diego, quoted by Cross (1997, p.4).

## PUTTING THE IDEAS TOGETHER

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### Medium and Mode

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With this mind set, I asked myself – what if we reversed the direction of the usual approach to the question? What if the validation of a term that manages to achieve widespread acceptance as a denomination, while keeping its non-specificity, is not an oddity to be overcome through a more obsessive scrutiny, but, what if this non-specificity is the very core of a proposition for a new radical mode in articulating the art making?

The re-stating of installation as an invention of non-specificity, led me to the option of using the term mode, and not medium. Rosalind Krauss says that 'Inventing a medium is like inventing a language... not only to have something like a grammar, a syntax, and a rhetoric, but a way of deciding what counts as competence in its use' (Krauss, 1997 p.6).

As a trigger for a new approach, the use of the term mode, implying the way something is done, was able to retain an awareness of 'what counts as the competence' in the making, as referred to by Krauss. At the same time, by putting the emphasis on understanding manner, a realm of inflection and dislocations, the adoption of the term mode allowed me to postpone the specifications of definitions in grammar, syntax and rhetoric, which are the very core of a medium's specificity.



## Field of Activities and 'Placeevent'

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By adopting the term mode, I also avoided the confining of installation art into a questioning about form. Instead, I was led to think about installation as a field of competence related to a certain mode of making art. That is to say, to think about installation not as a form but as a 'field of activities'.

'Field of activities', which as an expression reverberates the illuminating insight of Suderburg's 'installation activity', is a concept that was developed by the performers of the Welsh company Brith Gof<sup>2</sup>. The concept refers to what they call a 'placeevent' for 'unresolved relationships between various channels of address... a set of relationships which is fluid, as it remains subject to the event of its realisation' (Kaye, 2000 pp. 53-55).

If a crucial point for the research was to be found in understanding the general articulations between place and event, a good probing question would be: 'what are the conditions that make an event possible?' Gilles Deleuze (1988), analysing the similarities and differences regarding the concept of event as it is found in the work of the philosophers Whitehead (1861-1947) and Leibniz (1646-1716), summarises that:

Events are produced in a chaos, in a chaotic multiplicity, but only under the condition that a sort of screen intervenes. [...]

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Kaye (2000 p. 52), since 1988, Brith Gof, under the direction of Clifford McLucas and Mike Pearson, have created large-scale performances, inside socially charged sites, such as the disused Rover Car Factory in Cardiff, or the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Glasgow, or the Old British Coal works in Tredegar shortly before the building was to be demolished.

Chaos does not exist; it is an abstraction because it is inseparable from a screen that makes something – something rather than nothing – emerge from it. Chaos would be a pure Many, a pure disjunctive diversity, while the something is a One, not a pregiven unity, but instead the indefinite article that designates a certain singularity. How can the Many become the One? A great screen has to be placed in between them. Like a formless elastic membrane, an electromagnetic field, [...] the screen would extract differentials that could be integrated in ordered perceptions. (Deleuze, 1988 pp. 76-77)

Expanding on his comments, Deleuze states that, to both Whitehead and Leibniz, the first component of a definition of the event is extension, which exists as '[...] one element is stretched over the following ones, such that it is a whole and the following elements are its parts [...] an infinite series that contains neither a final term nor a limit [...]' (Deleuze, 1988 p.77).

The second component of the event would be its 'intrinsic properties' that always determine the event's texture as 'intensions, intensities, or degrees. It is something rather than nothing, but also this rather than that; no longer [...] the indefinite article, but the demonstrative pronoun' (Deleuze, 1988 p.77).

The third component of the event is the individual, and here Deleuze explains that for Whitehead 'the individual is creativity, the formation of the New.'

No longer is it the indefinite or the demonstrative mood, but a personal mood. If we call an element every thing that has parts and is a part, but also what has intrinsic features, we say that the individual is a "concrecence" of elements. This is something other than a connection or a conjunction. It is,

rather, a prehension<sup>3</sup>: an element is the given, the "datum" of another element that prehends it [...] Everything prehends its antecedents and its concomitants and, by degrees, prehends a world...the event<sup>4</sup> thus [is] 'a nexus of prehensions' [...] (Deleuze, 1988 pp.77-78)

For Deleuze, there is yet a fourth component in Whitehead's definition of the event, which is 'ingressions'. 'Events are fluvia', and ingressions happen when a permanence or 'properly, conceptual *feeling*'<sup>5</sup>, born in the flux, and grasped in prehension, produces 'ingression in the event.'

### Borrowing and Inclusiveness

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There is something I want to clarify before returning to Brith Gof's concept of 'placeevent' and 'field of activities', adding to them the notions about the event proposed by Deleuze – namely, the intervening screen, extension as infinite series, or the individual as creativity. Expanding the philosophical discussion introduced above is outside the scope of the present text. My intention here is to exercise a borrowing [in the direction] of concepts, using a strategy

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<sup>3</sup> 'The vector of prehension moves from the world to the subject, from the prehended datum to the prehending one [...]; thus the data of a prehension are *public* elements, while the subject is the intimate or *private* element that expresses immediacy, individuality, and novelty.(Deleuze, 1988 p. 78)

<sup>4</sup> [...] the prehended, the datum, is itself a preexisting or coexisting prehension, such that all prehension is a prehension of prehension, and the event thus a "nexus of prehension". Each new prehension becomes a datum. It becomes public, but for other prehensions that objectify it; the event is inseparably the objectification of the one prehension and the subjectification of another; it is at once public and private, potential and real, participating in the becoming of another event and the subject of its own becoming. (Deleuze , 1988 p. 78)

<sup>5</sup> [of three other characteristics of prehension], the subjective form[...] is the form in which the datum is folded in the subject, a "feeling" or manner,[..] (Deleuze , 1988 p. 78)

of circumnavigation that belongs to 'a world of captures instead of closures' (Deleuze, 1988 p.81).

I am using the term *borrowing*, and not *appropriating*, as I want to stress a built-in reversibility in the gesture. Borrowing a concept implies a tentative use, which is informed by the acknowledgement of the pressures the borrowed concept places towards reverting back to its former field of knowledge.

Reverberating as 'a third meaning'<sup>6</sup> between two fields of perception, the space of conceptual awareness opened up by reversibility highlights, by echoing them, the fissures between experience and language, which are pertinent to each field's respective code. Marking the belonging to an elsewhere, while promoting validation inside another discourse, reversibility enhances the effectiveness of a concept as a trigger of insertion for all that had been, so far, excluded as legitimated content.

Reversibility as a possibility becomes important, since what insertion demands from a concept is to submit to a double strategy, by which meaning is allocated in the present, but is expected to function as if part of a conversational piece. To operate under the conditions of being a conversational, implies that meaning will be exposed to an infectious process of re-significations in time, and intelligibility will depend on constantly re-accessing the

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<sup>6</sup> [...] I receive (and probably even first and foremost) a third meaning\* - evident, erratic, obstinate. I do not know what its signified is, at least I am unable to give it a name, but I can see clearly the traits, the signifying accidents of which this - consequently incomplete - sign is composed [...]

\* In the classical paradigm of the five senses the third sense is hearing (first in importance in the Middle Ages). This is a happy coincidence, since what is here in question is indeed listening [...]

(Barthes. 1977, p 53)



negotiations of difference, which is the same as to say, meaning will be in a state of permanent translation.

For that reason, borrowing is a valuable strategy when speaking from a site in between '[...] different canons. Canons like cannons, wage war. One is condemned to choose and hence to stand by a particular canon', (Andrew Benjamin, 1991 p.143).

I am favouring borrowing as a research tool, given that I expected my text to shun standing 'by a particular canon'. Standings like that force the 'irretrievable difference', existing in-between canons, to operate solely as a divider. Therefore, they tend to inscribe situations with an unnecessary restraint, which just obliterates the understanding of the site in-between differences as being a site of translation.

### **Intervening Screen and Field of Activities**

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In addressing installation as an invention of non-specificity, I am borrowing the terms 'field of activities' and 'placeevent', which were initially developed to define a work of Performance Art. The gesture finds justification in Alan Kaprow stating that '[f]undamentally, Environments and Happenings are similar, they are the passive and active sides of a single coin whose principle is extension' (Kaprow, 1959 p. 705).

Kaprow's statement brings us back to the first element – extension, which heads the definition of the event, as analysed previously by

Deleuze (1988). 'Extension', 'intensities', 'the individual as creativity' and 'ingressions', were then being presented as the composites of the event, which was said to be produced out of Chaos, but 'only under the condition that a sort of screen intervenes'. That is to say, the possibility of the event to happen depends on the presence of an intervening screen, which will act as a 'formless elastic membrane' or 'an electromagnetic field', and will extract from multiplicity the differentials 'to be integrated in ordered perceptions', or 'nexus of prehensions'.

When using those borrowed definitions as grounding devices for my propositions on installation art, I realised they started to organise themselves into two interwoven questions.

The first one was: - in concept, does the filtering 'intervening screen', stretched over multiplicity, exist as a non-specific 'field of activities'?

For Brith Gof, a 'field of activities' builds a 'placeevent' out of a 'fundamental exchange between site and performance, where [...] the installation of 'ghost' architectures seeks to engage with and then activate narratives and properties of a 'host' site' (Kaye, 2000 p. 53), creating a kind of 'saturated space', that operates in a 'restless relationship' of multiple viewpoints. According to Brith Gof:

The Host and the Ghost, of different origins, are co-existent but, crucially, are not congruent [...] There's always a mismatch between the 'host' and the 'ghost', and from the beginning of the work it's fractured, it's deeply, deeply fractured [...] we are dealing with a field of elements, and with symphonic relationship which [...] have gaps in them - you can see other things through [...] a place and what is built

there bleed into each other and constitute another order of existence – something like 'placeevent'. (Kaye, 2000 pp.54-56)

In a movement akin to the twisted embrace of the weft over and under the warp, the answer to our first question could be clarified by focusing on the notion of 'placeevent', as our central thread, and by reversing the terms of the first question to form the second one: – in act, does the 'field of activities', stretched over a site, exist as a non-specific 'intervening screen'?

As said above by Brith Gof, a 'placeevent' is supposed to be generated as an effect of a field of activities configured as 'ghost' architecture over a given site. In the mismatched encounter of these incongruent architectures, the field extends over the site as a formless elastic sieve, which lets 'other things through', filtering differentials to integrate into 'another order of existence', and bringing into visibility a perceptual novelty, that is, the 'placeevent'. It seems, from this description, that the way a 'field of activities' will in act constitute a 'placeevent', does mirror the way an 'intervening screen' will in concept create the conditions for 'the event'. A similarity in the procedures is present here, yet there is a difference in the outcome. Both the 'intervening screen' and the 'field of activities' operate as 'ghost architectures', but they open up to diverse landscapes.

Attempting a comparison between these two landscapes, and referring to the previously discoursed comments by Deleuze on the event, we could say that, on one hand, the 'intervening screen' will deal with chaotic multiplicity addressing it as a 'concrecence' of elements. There, an element is the given, the 'datum' of another element which prehends the former one. Everything prehends its



antecedents and its concomitants, in an assembling that translates as an accumulation of intensities. Such accumulation demands the use of devices of insertion for integrating the differentials in ordered perceptions. Thus, a passage is created, going from chaos to the event as a nexus of prehensions, in what constitutes a manoeuvre in language that aspires to density.

On the other hand, the 'field of activities' will deal with the latent disorder of the 'deeply fractured' elements, found on any perceptual instant happening in site, by exposing it to a fluid logic of multiple viewpoints. That is, a logic in which processes of slippage, drifts, ellipses and leaks of meaning will house the work in deferral and indeterminacy, in what constitutes a manoeuvre in art aspiring to dispersal.

### **Dispersal and Dilation**

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As a perceptual proposition, dispersal does not intend to affect reception through the imprinting of a self-contained figure of thought, always already existing in similarity to itself. On the contrary, the imprinting generated by dispersal is not a form, but rather a propensity for a displacement of attention, foregrounding the inclusion of an elsewhere, as latent presence in reception.

As in the mismatch between the 'host' and the 'ghost' architecture depicted by Brith Gof, what dispersal produces in reception is the doubling of the fracture existing between language and experience. Emulating this generative fracture as being an act of ambiguous re-

ordering through interruption, dispersal stresses these particularities blocking the demonstration of meaning, which then gets deferred in the continuum of interpretation.

Restating the perceptual instant as a cluster or as a manifold fragment, dispersal is 'designed to "give" us nothing but a sense of withdrawal, the overwhelming impression that "there is otherness" (il y a de l'autre)', moulding reception as 'differential truth'. Orchestrated by dispersal, reception becomes an instance of the conversational, to be experienced 'beyond a compulsive complicity in "the disease of identity" [...]', as a form of ethical/aesthetic "dilation" [...] (Ahearne, 1995 pp. 191-192).

Dilation is a notion present in what Jeremy Ahearne (1995) considers a 'distinctive pattern discernible in the movement' of Michel de Certeau's writing, 'informing his practice of both pushing forms of thought towards their limits and opening them up to others' (Ahearne, 1995 p. 190).

Certeau's writing model is made accessible to us by Ahearne (1995) as a threefold sequence: firstly, a figure of homogeneity encloses the subject, which becomes isolated from the world; secondly, this structure of enclosure is shown 'as (always already) fissured by the irruption or insinuation of manifold instances of alterity'; thirdly, an alteration or even a shattering of identity, resulting from the irruption of the manifold instances of alterity, which can be experienced either as panic or as release.

Experienced as release, the irruption of instances of alterity becomes dilation, but it 'does not efface identity, limitation and

enclosure, which always return, in altered forms, as marks of the speaking subject's irreducible difference and separation' (Ahearne, 1995, p. 190).

## Dilation and Event

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One of my research's initial assumptions was that installation is a response, in visual arts terms, to demands of social addressing, created, in the last century, by an increase of awareness surrounding notions of alterity.

Following this line of thought, understanding dilation as a process could be revealing. Though it starts as a sequential effect of the irruption of instances of otherness, forcing alterations in identity, dilation does not constitute an erasure, but a shattering, which no matter how fearsome, still acknowledges the addressed subject's irreducible difference and separation.

Dilation, in a way, comes into being from the same conditions that make an event possible: it is 'extension', stretched over the subject's enclosure, and is experienced as 'an infinite series that contains neither a final term nor a limit'; it is textured by 'intensities, or degrees, that are diverse propositions around 'something rather than nothing, but also this rather than that'; it is the individuation of a 'creativity', through the formation of a shattered New; and finally, it is a function of 'ingressions', or permanence, offering a vision of possibilities 'realized in fluvia'. (Deleuze, 1988 p.79)

Again, Deleuze explains the use of the term permanence, as you find in the concept of the event for Whitehead, as being 'eternal objects' that sometimes

[...]can be Qualities, such as colour or sound that qualifies a combination of prehensions; sometimes Figures, like the pyramid, that determine an extension; sometimes they are Things, like gold or marble, that [as conceptual '*feeling*'] cut through a matter. Their eternity is not opposed to creativity. Inseparable from the process of actualisation or realization into which they enter, they gain permanence only in the limits of the flux that creates them, or of the prehensions that actualise them. An eternal object can thus cease becoming incarnate, just as new things – a new shade of colour, or a new figure – can finally find their conditions [of becoming incarnate]. (Deleuze, 1988 pp.79-80)

## Dilation and Learning

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If, as much as for the event, a fourth component of dilation is said to be 'ingressions', or permanence, then this is a permanence 'born in flux' through the irruption of the instances of alterity. It occurs as shattering, not as erasure, in-between 'cease becoming incarnate' and 'find their conditions [of becoming incarnate]'. This double take allows dilation to exist beyond the [in]balance of fear and hope that, when happening over a hard divider, blends confrontation and transformation to a point of no retrieval.

There is no erasure of identity in dilation. As a function of the irruption of 'irreducible difference' – an encounter of alterity as such, dilation actually reaffirms the irreducible difference of its



'host'. Identity will return in 'altered forms'. So will dilation. In dilation there is no final knowledge, just learning...

Learning is the appropriate name for the subjective acts carried out when one is confronted with the objectivity of a problem (Idea), whereas knowledge designates only the generality of concepts or the calm possession of a rule enabling solutions. (Deleuze, 1968 p.164)

Learning implies a distinction 'between a "before" and an "after". Talking about temporality, Deleuze (1968) starts by analysing Kant's critique of Descartes, when the former objects to the possibility for the determination (I think), to bear upon the undetermined (I am), as nothing will explain how this undetermined is determined by the 'I think'.

Kant offers an addition to Descartes' equation: the determinable as being a third logic value, namely time, which will allow the undetermined existence to be determinable by the 'I think' as 'the existence of a [...] receptive phenomenal subject *appearing within time*'. Thus this third logic value amounts to the discovery of difference

[as] a long and inexhaustible story: I is an other, or the paradox of inner sense. [...] To 'I think' and 'I am' must be added the self [...] Nor is 'add' entirely the right word here, since it is rather a matter of establishing the difference and interiorising it within being and thought. It is as though the I were fractured from one end to the other: fractured by the pure and empty form of time [which] ceases to be cardinal and becomes ordinal, a pure order of time. [...] distributed unequally on both sides of a 'caesura', as a result of which beginning and end no longer coincided. (Deleuze, 1968 pp.85-86, 88-89)

The two processes happening here – the temporality of learning about 'establishing the difference and interiorising it within being and thought', and the temporality of dilation as a response to the irruption of instances of alterity – are both a temporality of ordinal time 'distributed unequally on both sides of a 'caesura'. As a result, beginning and end no longer coincide as markers for the 'receptive phenomenal subject *appearing within time*'.

### Dilation and Caesura

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Furthering the investigation on dilation, we should ask: – what are the conditions that time punctuated by caesura imposes on the subject *appearing within time*?

[...] The caesura, along with the before and after which it ordains once and for all, constitutes the fracture in the I [...] the caesura, of whatever kind, must be determined in the image of a unique and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole. This image itself is divided [and will] throw time out of joint [...]

However [...] it creates the possibility of a temporal series. In effect, there is always a [first] time at which the imagined act is supposed 'too big for me'. This defines a priori the past or the before. [...]

The second time, which relates to the caesura itself, is thus the present of metamorphosis, a becoming-equal to the act and a doubling of the self, and the projection of an ideal self in the image of the act [...]

As for the third time in which the future appears, this signifies that the event [the caesura] and the act possess a secret coherence which excludes that of the self; that they turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces, as though the bearer of the new world were carried

away and dispersed by the shock of the multiplicity to which it gives birth: what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself. (Deleuze, 1968 pp. 89-90)

What could be the tremendous event, which firstly would be 'too big for me'; secondly, through the caesura it installs in time, would bring the present as the metamorphosis of becoming-equal to the overwhelming act; and thirdly, would reveal a future where the becoming-equal is in fact a becoming-other, the equal to the unequal in itself? What could be this tremendous event that translates as a process of 'self-othering'<sup>7</sup>?

### Dilation and Self-othering

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Derrida (1996) speaking of the 'originary promise without any proper content', that is, the promise 'that gives a language', says it is a promise addressed to 'the other recognized as an entirely different other (the entirely other is entirely other where a knowledge or recognition does not suffice for it), the other recognized as mortal'. (Derrida, 1996 p. 68).

Here a sharing is trying to surface. The other, multiplied in difference by the alterity of their mortality, sets in motion an irreversible process of looking back when addressed, thus reflecting in their responding eyes the unavoidable mortality of their addresser.

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<sup>7</sup> 'Self-othering' was a concept generously offered by Catherine de Zegher, during a talk on the exhibition 'Inside the Visible, Begin the Beguine in Flanders', presented as part of the Research Seminar Series organized by Michael Newman, at CSM, 2000-02.



Between the self and the other, the sharing of an accepted mortality, spanning an arch of response that goes from fear to solidarity, nourishment and joy, emerges 'where a knowledge does not suffice'. For this sharing to be made possible, first the 'entirely other' needs to be circumnavigated by my slow learning in dilation, which, as an effect of the tremendous event of recurring caesuras, is progressively generating self-othering.

The possibility of sharing is then an effect of self-othering. This is the process by which the other, in whatever form, acting as a demanding presence, becomes a co-subject with my own *appearing within time* as equal to what is the unequal in itself, or we could say, the self's *appearing within time* as a modal<sup>8</sup> 'difference *with itself* (avec soi) rather than difference *from itself* (d'avec soi)' (Derrida, 1996 p. 68).

The difference *with itself* of the self-othering process is possible, because dilation shatters but does not erase identity, on the contrary, '[i]t welcomes it, collects it, not in [...] its unity, [...] but in the uniqueness or singularity of a gathering together of its difference to itself' (Derrida, 1996 p. 68).

Difference *with itself*, not erasure, as the shattering imposed by dilation on identity dislocates the irruption of instances of alterity from the condition of being a 'crude opposition' entrapped around a divider. Instead, in dilation the instances of alterity will perform 'in fluvia', acting as the carrier 'distributing the disparities in a multiplicity' (Deleuze, 1968 p. 50).

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<sup>8</sup> '[...] modal distinction, is established between being or the attributes on the one hand, and the intensive variations of which these are capable on the other. These variations [...] are individuating modalities of which the finite and the infinite constitute precisely singular intensities.' (Deleuze, 1968 p. 39)

## Multiplicity and Infinite Learning

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Speaking about multiplicity, Deleuze (1968 p. 183) lists three conditions for its appearance as an idea:

- no prior identity of its constituting elements, as multiplicity manifests itself through differences that have 'neither sensible form nor conceptual signification, nor, therefore assignable function';
- reciprocal relations allowing for the determination of the elements inside 'precisely non-localisable ideal connections [...] proceed by the juxtaposition of neighbouring regions';
- simultaneity between the actualisation of the '*differential relation*' occurring as '*diverse spatio-temporal relationships*' without external reference to a uniform space, and the actualisation of '*its elements* [...] in a variety of *terms* and forms.'

Under these three conditions, the idea will find definition as internal multiplicity<sup>9</sup>, 'in other words, a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements'. As internal multiplicity the idea is to be taken not as an 'element of knowledge but that of an infinite "learning", which is of a different nature to knowledge'<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Spatio-temporal relations no doubt retain multiplicity, but lose interiority; concepts of the understanding retain interiority, but lose multiplicity, which they replace by the identity of an 'I think' or something thought. Internal multiplicity, by contrast, is characteristic of the Idea alone. (Deleuze, 1968 p.183)

<sup>10</sup> Learning to swim or learning a foreigner language means composing the singular points of one's own body or one's own language with those of another shape or element, which tears us apart but also propels us into a hitherto unknown and unheard-of world of problems. To what are we dedicated if not to those problems which demand the very transformation of our body and our language? (Deleuze, 1968 p.192)

As an infinite learning addressing the 'system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements' internal to the encounters of otherness, dilation is, in short, the attempted deciphering of the message from the other. It is 'of a different nature to knowledge', since the message from the other carries meaning which 'remains hidden, not only for the one who receives the message but also for the one who sends it.' (Laplanche, 1992a p.23).

### The Message from The Other and Afterwardness

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The message from the other is the third term between identity and the irruption of alterity: 'something [an enigmatic message] is proposed by the other, [...] which is then *afterwards* retranslated and reinterpreted.' (Laplanche, 1992b p.222).

What is being called here afterwardness is a temporal dimension allowing for either progressive or retrogressive directions to be established in a flow of active messages, which have been implanted in the past, and will in the future activate a reinterpretation of the past that then retranslates the present.

The concept of afterwardness is proposed and explained by Laplanche (1992b) through the critical analysis of the dream Freud used to introduce the notion of 'deferred action' – *Nachtraglichkeit*, which is the psychoanalytic notion the term 'afterwardness' attempts to convey, as a non-interpretative translation<sup>11</sup>:

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<sup>11</sup> [...] we could not have a single term in either English or French for "nachtraglich/Nachtraglichkeit". This approach is well illustrated by Strachey who translates "nachtraglich / Nachtraglichkeit" by a whole series of terms according to the context: "by deferred action",



So [when the adult who sees the child at the wet-nurse's breast retroactively imagines all that he could have drawn erotically from that situation if only he had know] if one introduces a third term into this scene – that is, the nurse and her own sexuality – which is only at best vaguely sensed by the baby – then it is no longer possible to consider afterwardness in dual terms. The third term is then passed to the child from the adult: this is the nurse's message to the child.' (Laplanche, 1992b pp. 221 – 222).

Let us rejoice and applaud Laplanche for this irruption of the wet-nurse as visibility inside this anecdotic auto-closure man-baby / adult man. Yet, we should also attempt to expand on the singularities of her sexuality as efficiency in the scene. It is very telling in the story, that the source of the breast-feeding is not a mother but a wet-nurse, a caretaker, a working woman. This choice of character releases the action from being conditioned by the natural drive of maternity and introduces a distance, where the delivering of human sexuality becomes an option of responsibility towards care and caressing. Motherhood is a gift that not every woman is prepared to fully exercise. Still, the woman who is fully maternal, as in these conditions a wet-nurse would be, this woman would probably bond to any baby, not only her own. Such gesture would be a fact of accepted responsibility, born not out of guilt but out of a caring impulse, a plain offering of nourishment and caressing furthering life.

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"subsequently", "in a deferred fashion", "subsequent", "after-effect", "deferred effect", "deferred nature of the effect", "later", etc. As long as one wishes to 'interpret' in this way, and impose meaning on an essentially open text, a unitary translation is impossible. [...] So either one decides to split up and divide the term in translation, or one chooses a term that will allow the reader to stay with Freud's term and reinterpret it for themselves. That's why I propose a translation that is not interpretative: I suggest the term "après-coup", and "afterwardness" in English. In all cases in Freud, it's possible to use either "afterwards" or "afterwardness". (Laplanche, 1992b p. 220)

Laplanche's wet-nurse is probably the woman Derrida (1992), for a brief moment, is willing to conjure up against 'the logic of sacrificial responsibility' that commands a father (Abraham) to put to death his beloved son (Isaac), because the great Other (God) orders him so. 'It is a story of father and son, of masculine figures, of hierarchies among men', and Derrida (1992) wonders 'if a woman were to intervene in some consequential manner' would 'its law, be altered, inflected, attenuated or displaced'? (Derrida, 1992 pp. 75-76).

The logic of sacrificial responsibility being overwritten by the logic of responsibility as caressing...or a retentive logic of hierarchies being deflected by a recurring logic of dispersal, the pattern of which is to be found in the dispersal of the body fluids. These are options of behaviour, functioning as 'differential truth', when addressing the same problem – the learning of the 'knowing not to know', or else, the learning of our accepted mortality<sup>12</sup>.

### **The Knowing not to Know and our Mortality**

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The message from the other is our half-known shared secret – we know we are mortal, but we learn our mortality as an ever receding knowledge, the full scope of which escapes us while we are still alive. This is a problem in our thoughts, and for Deleuze (1968), a 'problem of thought' is not a question of essences, but of evaluating what is important or not, and this evaluation

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<sup>12</sup> 'To share a secret is not to know or to reveal the secret, it is to share we know not what: nothing that can be determined'. Derrida (1992 p. 80) is here talking about faith, yet I am borrowing the words and relating them to mortality...

'takes place entirely within the inessential or within the description of a multiplicity' (Deleuze, 1968 p.189).

The evaluation of what is important or not ['what counts as competence'] should be put into practice as an infinite learning, a recurring listening, if multiplicity is to be grasped preserving its condition of being a non-oppositional and 'delicate milieu of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities' (Deleuze, 1968 p.50).

The 'knowing not to know' of infinite learning is the capacity of accommodating, inside this 'delicate milieu', the caesura happening around the tremendous event created by the irruption of a manifold instance of alterity. The 'knowing not to know', as a proposition respondent to a problem of thought – our mortality, creates the conditions in the self for accommodating the caesura of the shattering event not as panic but as release. It translates dilation as the site of infinite learning, a before and after fracturing but not erasing identity, which always returns, though in altered forms, again and again and again, within the temporality of afterwardness.

### **Installation and Infinite Learning**

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What was at stake when I proposed installation art as a non-specific mode of art making, was a particular but practice-based understanding of installation as an activity that is, as I



would now define it, a procedure in space aspiring to emulate the thought process of infinite learning.

According to this reading, installation art is a respondent, in visual arts terms, to demands of social addressing, created in the last century by an increase of awareness around notions of alterity. To perform the task with subtlety, installation art borrows the strategy of 'knowing not to know', belonging to the infinite learning in process of self-othering, and organizes its visibility in space as an attempt to omit form taken as identity. Or in other words, installation art organizes its visibility as a paradoxical attempt to constitute form as 'the vestige of the un-formed', happening in-between 'cease becoming incarnate' and 'find their conditions (of becoming incarnate)'. For Derrida (1972):

Form (presence, self-evidence) would not be the ultimate recourse, the last analysis to which every possible sign would refer [...] form in itself already would be the *trace* (*ikhnos*) of a certain nonpresence, the vestige of the un-formed, which announces-recalls its other [...] The trace would not be the mixture, the transition between form and the amorphous, presence and absence, etc., but that which, by eluding this opposition, makes it possible in the irreducibility of its excess. [...] the closure [...] would not occur *around* a homogenous and continuous field [...] Rather, it would fissure the structure and history [...] organically inscribing and systematically articulating the traces of the before and the after both from within and without [...] Thereby proposing an infinite, and infinitely surprising, reading.[...] (Derrida, 1972 p. 172, note 16)

Taken as a non-specific mode, the novelty installation art brings to art making is precisely the intention to approach meaning three-dimensionally just from and through the capture of traces 'in the



irreducibility of its excess'. As a perceptual gesture addressing multiplicity and uncertainty, dispersal is installation's defining tactic. Sprawled as 'intervening screen', dispersal will orchestrate the capture of traces by slotting them into layers of 'symphonic relationship', which 'have gaps in them', and 'things seen through' blend in a 'field of activities'. This field generates a 'placeevent', or site of dilation, from where the work is proposed as 'infinite, and infinitely surprising, reading', a recurring learning, which is eternally starting again, again and again, from multiple points of view, in the temporality of afterwardness.

The generative moment when the 'placeevent' surfaces from the field of activity, is the passage when/where installation art, despite being a non-specific mode articulated by dispersal, will produce the visibility of a medium. The 'placeevent' is the locality for the specificity of the work to occur, as each artist working with installation, using any media whatsoever (video, objects, light, sound), will master the moment of the surfacing of the 'placeevent' from and through a whole set of particular qualities of modulation, which are peculiar to their personal choices of vocabulary.

Let me rephrase it, for clarity: installation art as a field of activities articulated by dispersal is non-specific. It is a mode not a medium. Thereby it can, and will, use any medium whatsoever in the constitution of a 'placeevent', or site of dilation, which will operate as the visibility of a specific medium, related to a specific authorship.

Saying it again, in another way:

- Installation art is a mode, a mode of address, which adopting dispersal as its defining tactic, addresses the world as a proliferation of multiplicities (a 'delicate milieu of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities');
- Installation art translates the addressing of the world as multiplicity into a radical proposition of art making, which gives each artist an independent right of reinvention not only over style, but reinvention over the medium. That is, the medium specificity is dislocated from the mode of address, as tactics, to the 'placeevent' as materiality or presence engendered by a 'field of activities', the latter being the 'ghost architecture' added to a 'host' by the mode of address.

### **Acknowledgement of Reality and Responsibility as Caressing**

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The acknowledgement of reality as being a proliferation of multiplicities...does it demand a listening attentive to traces, which are to be filtered and captured by acts of responsibility as caressing? The answer is not an immediately and openhearted 'yes', but a 'yes' that advances by stages, commanded by the historical irruptions of instances of alterity.

If we accept a genealogy in visual art, starting with Dada, for the opening up of a process of ruptures with tradition, which accumulates propositions leading to the constitution of installation as an art

making that addresses notion of otherness, this opening up becomes a long gestation of a dilation in culture. It must have demanded a constant irruption of instances of alterity as a recurring caesura, generated through the repetition of tremendous events. This would bring again, again and again, the remembrance of our mortality.

Humanity as narration is a heavy accumulation of experiences of destruction, heaped up over the centuries, as a terrifying burden. Belonging to a general work of mourning, they are to be acknowledged and shared, as the infinite learning of our mortality. Yet, during the last century, this task was made more urgent, as a change happened in the temporality of reception for those narratives of the human condition. The invention of photography and cinema brought the cultural caesura, induced by those tremendous events, under the faster and constant scrutiny of an 'expanded field of witness'<sup>13</sup>.

A constant demand from the world, the sharing of the human horror not as exception but as extremes of human condition, mixes with our daily concerns and inhabits our lives as an unrelenting problem of thought, pressuring the self into a recurring process of dilation. That means, the 'grammar, syntax and rhetoric' of the language that explains and sustains our worldview and self-image as human beings, has to endure and respond to strains of uncertainty.

Uncertainty becomes then the paradoxical transversal measure to be adopted in a responsible evaluation of what is important or not, taking place 'within the description of a multiplicity' marked by caesura.

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<sup>13</sup> I am here borrowing Rosalind Krauss's well know concept and redirecting it towards the social sphere.



Maybe, the acceptance of uncertainty as a parameter for evaluation indicates that the need for validation through recognized genealogies is being minimized, and situations are starting to be addressed through acts of attentive listening, informed by a general notion of responsibility imagined as caressing.

### Social Addressing and Uncertainty

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I stated before that installation activity, in constituting itself as a non-specific mode of art making, is actually answering, in visual art terms, questions brought forward by an awareness of issues of otherness. As indicated above, such questioning is a gradual effect of the expanded field of witnessing, which continuously challenges the contemporary forms of social addressing, and dislocates its established framings towards new strands of uncertainty.

The relation between contemporary forms of social addressing and uncertainty is being taken here as the perceptual pattern informing choices of configuration for installation art. However, as uncertainty is being taken as a parameter, the assumption that the social sphere has such a defining role brings no concern as a limitation.

On the contrary, it seems to stand as a complementary external interface for another proposition, already present from an early stage in my research, a proposition that is still valid, but will

soon be rephrased: installation art, when presenting itself as a field of activities, which is respondent to contextual relations, is in fact, externalising the space of inner uncertainty that exists between the intention and the manufacture of an artwork. I shall now expand on this.

### Uncertainty and the Emotion-value

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When I first addressed the space of inner uncertainty, I was aware that it is not a void, but a space where meaning is in an obtuse state of pre-conceptual reverberation. Nevertheless, and here I am borrowing again from Barthes (1977), such space contains lines of force, activated by the emotion-value of significances<sup>14</sup>.

The concept of emotion-value is a valuable reading tool for investigating how the simultaneity between the practical work and the theoretical inquiry deflects the lines of force active inside the space of inner uncertainty. Emotion-value, as expressed by Barthes (1977), is a concept related to the 'obtuse meaning', in contrast to 'the obvious meaning', which he considers as being 'held in a complete system of destination'. Conversely, he says, 'obtuse meaning appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information [...] it has something derisory about it: opening out into the infinity of language, it can come through as limited in the eyes of analytical reason.' (Barthes, 1977, pp. 54-55)

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<sup>14</sup> '[...]. Taking up Julia Kristeva's *significance*, Barthes is using it to signal the play of the signifier as it eludes meaning [the signified] and registers instead the rhythms and the materiality of the body's opening onto pleasure' (Krauss, 1997 p. 13.)



The advantage of this concept as the basis for relating theory to practice lies in its recognition that the critical language does not 'explain' artistic meaning but can contribute to its 'dynamic' cycle of creation and critique. Barthes' concept provides some clarification of why the extrapolation to and from the artwork and written analysis is a complex process, due to the fact that the 'obtuse meaning':

[...] is a signifier without signified, hence the difficulty in naming it [...] reading remains suspended between definition and approximation. [...] If the obtuse meaning can not be described, that is because, in contrast to the obvious meaning, it does not copy anything. How do you describe something that does not represent anything? (Barthes, 1977 p. 61)

Fortunately, the 'obtuse meaning', though being non representational, still 'carries a certain emotion, an emotion-value, an evaluation [...] which simply designates what one loves, what one wants to defend'.

As an investigative reading tool, applicable to both the theoretical and the practical field, the designation function of the emotion-value can help in the recognition of what Barthes (1977) describes as a 'network of displacements and substitutions', seen as peculiar to the artist, when articulating raw material, process, form and concept.

In order to organise my understanding of how the emotion-value determines lines of force inside the space of inner uncertainty, I developed a sequential diagram, or circuit, which was named



'the Score', for this term's resonance on mark making, the enumeration of facts, and music writing.

The use of the term score inside a visual arts context has already a historical precedent with the 'event' or word scores, which the Fluxus artists, like George Brecht, Yoho Ono, Dick Higgins, George Maciunas and La Monte Young (Dezeuze. A., 2002, pp.78-94), developed during the Sixties, either as visual objects or as instructions for performance. Yet, this fact was not decisive in borrowing the term. This time the term was not in use as a prescriptive writing of a set of rules or instructions to be followed. Actually, it was just meant to be an overall description of interrelated actions, taking place inside any creative process.

### **The Score and the 'Autopoetics Closure'**

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The functioning described in the Score starts with the diffuse recognition of a punctuation happening upon the general perceptual field, a kind of veiled caesura, which slowly configures itself into a mark of intensity. From there a double flow of inquiry is established through making and conceptualisation. The two activities communicate constantly inside a looped system of action and reaction, which is, in fact, not an oppositional structure, but a realm of mutual infection – a manifold idea-gesture.

Niklas Luhmann (1995) refers to a similar looped system of action and reaction inside a perceptual field, and names it 'autopoetics closure'. According to Luhmann, an 'autopoetics closure' is a 'system of self-referred operations that recognizes an outside, an environment (able to)

be reintroduced into the system in the form of a relationship between self-reference and hetero-reference' (Luhmann, 1995 p. 11).

I understood the concept of 'autopoetics closure' as being an internalised process for the constitution of a sameness *appearing within time*, which simultaneously outlines itself *against* but also *towards* an outside, as the latter is being taken as a place of difference or alterity.

The applicability of the Score as a reading tool profited greatly from borrowing the concept proposed by Luhmann (1995), as it allowed me to grasp the creative process in visual arts as an 'autopoetics closure', that is, a process able to recognize an outside, despite being engaged in an intense auto-reflexivity.

As a template for behaviour, the 'autopoetics closure' was certainly a good description of the mutual nourishment between practice and theory. Happening inside the closure, this mutual nourishment that from now on will be referred to as the hetero-reference/self-reference dynamic, slowly creates the conditions for the materialization in perception of a new system of relevance.

Essentially, the system of relevance is always in-progress, assembling editing criteria, to be held against the pressures of uncertainty peculiar to a creative process. As part of the process of its own constitution, and also at any time beyond that, the system will work by retrieving peculiar sequences of accumulated traces, or fractured content, which are circulating inside the hetero-reference/self-reference dynamic, as propositions of 'differential truth' towards meaning.

As an after-effect of those interventions by the system of relevance, a proposition starts to be instilled into visibility, or being more direct, an artwork becomes visible.



## The System of Relevance and the Emotion-value

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The strong element for the constitution of a system of relevance seems to be the lines of force through which the emotion-value circulates inside the 'autopoetics closure'.

Starting from Barthes (1977), we could say that the designation 'of what one loves, what one wants to defend', carried out by the emotion-value, finds its expression inside the 'autopoetics closure' as a propensity. That is to say, the emotion-value's effectiveness functions as *laterality*, and as such, is able to accommodate uncertainty, while progressing towards the constitution of a system of relevance.

Let me attempt an explanation of *laterality*. *Laterality* is a sane perceptual option when treating the excess of the world as a multiplicity. *Laterality* is non-assertive and therefore facilitates elliptical takes on any given landscape of meaning. Since it operates outside a rigid grid, it demands a constant reassessment of the gathered information. As a consequence of this constant reassessment a time delay is brought into the action. When necessary, the delay will be used as a window of opportunity for subtle readjustments, leading to micro-transformations in the way a situation is perceived and addressed.

As a perceptual manoeuvre, *laterality* operates through recurring simultaneity, and has a high threshold of acceptance towards gaps in the continuum of information. The high threshold of acceptance remains operational, seeing that any gap, at any *un*-certain point,

will probably be overwritten by the reassessed information. It is precisely the adaptability around gaps in the continuum of information that makes *laterality* a very effective perceptual strategy for situations of uncertainty.

The emotion-value, being a propensity that performs by the means of *laterality*, taken as a perceptual positioning, is also the carrier that slowly draws the hetero-reference contents into the realm of awareness belonging to the self-reference.

The hetero-reference/self-reference dynamic is a morphing process akin to dilation. It is initiated when a mark of intensity triggers a twofold search to be pursued simultaneously by processes of making and conceptualisation. The configuration of this dynamic depends on demands posed by the irruption of instances of alterity, that is to say, the needs of translation happening in the encounter between the multiplicity of the world and the undeterminancy of the self.

As with dilation, such encounter shatters but does not erase the identity of the creative self. Reframed, the challenged artistic identity finds resolution in a process of self-othering, which prompts, for an art maker, the need to re-assemble the editing criteria, i.e., the need for a new system of relevance.

The system of relevance performs as a topographic survey of what counts as competence in this evolving site of dilation – the hetero-reference/self-reference dynamic. Central to the creative process, the dynamic is sometimes a frantic environment, where the challenge of the creative identity cause emotions to ride the full



spectrum going from the painful and the confrontational to the ecstatic and back again.

Functioning always as a parallel competence<sup>15</sup> to any identity whatever, the system of relevance gradually builds up the necessary conditions for the rendering of a geography of meaning, made mostly out of traces. These traces are filtered from the hetero-reference/ self-reference dynamics, by the work of endorsement and disavowal of the denomination function of the emotion-value.

### **The System of Relevance and the Field of Activities**

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As stated before, the emotion-value is a device of recognition. It is '[...] an evaluation [...] which simply designates what one loves, what one wants to defend' (Barthes, 1977, p. 59). Most importantly, the emotion-value is able to operate from a realm of elusiveness and uncertainty, which means it is able to operate as a propensity.

The emotion-value, taken as a propensity, is not a rule-maker. It builds the system of relevance as a device tuned to capture reverberations. Or being more explicit, the designation function of the emotion-value configures the system of relevance as a field with

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<sup>15</sup> A radical example of parallel competence between two high-pressure collaborating groups of makers happened during a socio-economic event named The Zeal Strike (Chau, 1986, p. 177). The Zeal Strike was invented during the 1970s by factory workers in Brazil, when living under the pressure of a dictatorial government that had banned the right to strike. It was a strategy developed to undermine production as a way to force negotiations. The workers kept carrying out their tasks, but started to follow, in a literal sense, all the technical instructions specified by the design team. The result was a greater number of faulty products, than usual. Apparently, beyond the design qualities of a product, it took hands-on ability and experience to be 'in the know' on how to deal with all the unforeseen and small adjustments that pre-robotics serial production demanded. Therefore, without the active and conscious interference of the workers abilities, there were less final products ready for the market. The Zeal Strike was the witty demarcation of a counter-place of alterity, which allowed a parallel competence to be recognized inside the limits of a given situation.

a pulse – a 'field of activities', from where attentive editing will bring into visibility an artwork, or should I say a 'placeevent'?

As I previously proposed, there is a similarity in the procedures by which, on one hand, 'the intervening screen' addresses chaos, generating the event, and on the other, the 'field of activities' addresses multiplicity, generating a 'placeevent' – both configurations operate as 'ghost architectures', though they are erected by diverse perceptual manoeuvres: density for the event, dispersal for the 'placeevent'.

A possible third element to be added to this set of similarities, the system of relevance, also operates as a 'ghost architecture' addressing its 'host', in this case, the hetero-reference/self-reference dynamic, in order to generate the visibility of an artwork. As with 'the intervening screen' and 'the field of activities', the system of relevance also owes its configuration to a perceptual manoeuvre, which so far has been called *denomination* – the denomination function of the emotion-value.

As said before, the denomination function of the emotion-value is a significance related to the 'obtuse meaning [which] appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information [...]' (Barthes, 1977 p. 55). Being 'a signifier without signified', and as such 'knowing not to know', the *denomination* is a perfect meaning-maker device for moments of dilation, when identity is shattered but not erased, always returning, though in altered forms, as an indeterminacy *appearing within time*, in a subtle process of self-othering, which is played along with the constitution of every new system of relevance.

If dilation and the creative process share the same meaning-making device (i.e. the denomination function of the emotional-value), and if installation art is a respondent in visual art terms to awareness around notions of alterity (i.e., awareness of process of self-othering belonging to moments of dilation in culture), then it is not difficult to figure out why installation activity would choose, as a template, to emulate a functioning inside the creative process.

True to its affinities (Process, Performance, Happening, Land art), installation art, as a radical perceptual manoeuvre, chose to dismiss the specificity of an isolated finished object as its support for meaning. Instead, installation art went back one stage into the creative process and elected, as a template for its mode of address, the non-specific 'field of activities' that is generated inside an 'autopoetics closure' by the works of a system of relevance.

### **Reception as Production and Production as Reception**

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When refusing to configure its event as a self-contained object, installation art is, in fact, refusing to reaffirm the multiplicity of the world as a site of counteracted meaning. Taking an alternative route through the backyards of meaning, installation activity addresses the multiplicity of the world as a site of uncertainty and dilation. It does so by bringing the work into visibility as a system of relevance, which performs between matter and space in order to place meaning in the actualisation of a reading by the viewer.



Meaning as a function of afterwardness is acknowledged in both propositions, but between them there is a shift that repositions the viewer as creative agent: meaning as function of a reading *in time* is then brought to the condition of meaning as function of a reading *in site*.

The demand for actual presence enlists *the works of viewing* as a defining element in the work's effectiveness. Reception is reassured as production (of meaning). The viewer is welcomed as a parallel competence, whose personal creative process is entitled to configure peculiar diversions in meaning inside the perceptual field proposed by the work.

If the reception of the work were the production of *meaning from the work*, would the production of the work be a reception of *meaning from the world*?

Or put in other terms, if the viewer and the maker are to be accepted as parallel competences, does it mean that an effort towards the reception of *the work* by the viewer equals an effort towards the reception of *the world* by the maker?

If that is the case, when the work is made visible as a system of relevance, which performs between matter and space and is placing its possibility of meaning in the actualisation of a reading by the viewer, could we say when this is happening, that the work is being proposed as an exercise in sharing of responsibility for the intelligibility of an uncertain world – an intelligibility that has been constantly shattered, as an object of perception, by the contemporary visibility of the human as horror?



And if again that is the case, could we go on to say this self-appointed task of sharing responsibility is what has informed installation activity's options regarding dismissing the self-contained object and making the work accessible as a system of relevance?

Let me now use those questions and the conceptual framework developed so far to interrogate my own practice. But first, some considerations on writing about one's own work...

## PUTTING THE WORK IN PLACE

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### Making Work, Writing Words

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The way a work tells you, the artist, that it is done and finished, is by imposing on you the status of being its first viewer.

Though this moment of imposed metamorphosis from maker to viewer is recognized immediately – you cannot touch the work any more, it does not lift you to a new plateau of instantaneous understanding. Quite the contrary, it is a moment of newly found blindness towards the work, which can become a disturbing experience, as it follows a kind of unspeakable certitude on 'knowing' what the work is about, which is usually present in the last stages of an art making.

On the other hand, maybe this moment of instantaneous alienation from the work comes about just to signal that a new creative process is starting – your creative process as a viewer of your own work.

It is from this standpoint – as a maker-viewer, that I decided I would be presenting and analysing the practice made for this research. This maker-viewer's option had its peculiarities, and will be useful to be examined in detail.

Earlier, I proposed that an artwork is the product of a peculiar view, or reading of traces, exercised by the artist when facing the world. Introduced to the viewer in the form of a mark of intensity in the

perceptual field, this artwork becomes a territory of significances which '[...] has the potential of *indefinite extensions*, since in each viewer it provokes a new pattern of readings'<sup>16</sup>.

What if we added time to the repertoire of factors inducing difference in the reading of meaning by the viewer? Or putting the question another way, more relevant to my position as maker-viewer – what happens to the readings made by the same viewer, when coming back to the work at different moments in time?

And what if these questions, about the maker-viewer, were to be widened to include certain points about ascendance in the constitution of meaning?

For instance, if the maker is a privileged viewer, with direct access to the conceptual framework and hands-on understanding of the making, does it then signify that the maker's reading deserves a privileged status as mediator for the work's reception?

My evaluation is that the maker's reading is not an explanation of the work, but a second instance, or parallel competence, which should not be addressed as a critical text mediating between the work and other viewers. In fact, the maker's reading is a territory of

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<sup>16</sup> Jean Fisher is here talking about what she refers to as 'the old aesthetic argument that there are two basic principle of conceiving an art object', that is, the art object as a totality or as infinity. Her description of the relations of meaning-making inside the art object as infinity matches the relations on offer in 'dispersal'.

'[...]. Meaning is not proffered from some authoritative, connoisseurial or idealised vantage point, but has to be constructed in the mind of each individual viewer in his or her spatio-temporal and mental trajectory through the work. Essentially, this kind of art presents a choreographic space open to the viewer's work of transformation. Since each viewer construes meaning from the relation between what the work presents and his or her own histories and experiences, there can be no definitive meaning. Among viewers sharing a similar *habitus*, of course, the possibilities of meaning cannot be infinite either, but the work nevertheless has the potential of *indefinite extension*, since in each viewer it provokes a new pattern of reading. (Fisher, 2003 p. 274)

self-reference for the work, as a making-in-process. That is, a 'place-in-waiting', as it guards the passages that will bring content into re-signification, triggering the works yet to come.

Another delicate question when writing about one's own work is: which format? Here we have four options:

- a performative writing, attempting the doubling of the foundational creative gesture, which is imprinted in the work being read;
- a straightforward description on how the work originated, how it functions, where it was exhibited, what kind of effect it provokes in reception and what has been learned from it during the making and after it has been finished;
- a critical evaluation of the conceptual framework, against which the work was outlined;
- a conversational mixture of the three previous options, which is best exemplified by artists' interviews.

Lately, interviews have become the international format of choice for presenting a maker's reading, as the conversational strategies of meaning-making, happening during an interview, allow for a fluidity that is more akin to the art's own parameters of intelligibility.

While going through these considerations of the art making's intelligibility, I realised that, on writing about my own work from the standpoint of a maker-viewer, I would be expressing myself from inside two creative processes – the making and the viewing.



It became clear, in this context of simultaneity between processes, that a coherent choice to pursue, for the benefit of this research, was to address the writing about my work as an opportunity to test the adequacy of the Score as a reading tool for creative processes in general.

The Score (as defined in the section The Score and the 'Autopoetics Closure') describes the creative process as a circuit inter-connecting four instances: mark of intensity, hetero-reference/self-reference dynamics, emotion-value and the system of relevance. As denominations, they relate productively to the events happening inside the art making. But they do so as facilitators for an understanding about the functioning of the events, not as facilitators for the constitution of the events themselves – these events are instances of an existing process, which would go on operating, had it been named or not.

Conversely, to use these denominated concepts as investigative tools in the viewing meant that the Score's key terms would assist the surfacing, into verbal consciousness, of the implied content being addressed by the artwork, when dealing with raw material.

The Score is a diagram of the functioning of the creative process. By structuring this investigative writing about installation with terms taken from the Score, maybe I would be able to demonstrate that:

- the making and the viewing of an artwork are both creative processes that follow a similar dynamic of meaning-making, which is based on the constitution of systems of relevance;

- (consequently) the system of relevance, is taken as a template by installation activity in order to assert meaning as a sharing of responsibility between the maker and the viewer.

However, on my first attempt to use the Score's key-terms as reading tools for the practice in this research, I discovered something else was missing. When rehearsing the investigation of the hetero-reference/self-reference dynamics active inside the recent work, it revealed itself as a landscape of meaning heavily informed by the traces of content belonging to the former work as signs of its '[...] potential for after life, for reinterpretation, [and] for continual translation [...]' (Benjamin, A. 1991 p. 152).

To include this former production as an element of the reference dynamics informing the practice for this research, I would have to: a] return to my accumulated readings of the former work; b] locate the passages and turns in meaning making, which exist as traces in previous moments of reception for the work; c] indicate how they were leading to the questions being addressed by the recent practice.

Also, for a question of consistency when dealing with both productions – the former and recent, I realised that I should follow the same pattern of inquiry. Therefore, I had to conceive an investigative pattern able to: a] access information directly, as the one available in the practice for this research; b] access information indirectly, by keeping track of content throughout the layers of accumulated readings in time, which I knew would be the situation to face when dealing with my former work.

Eventually, using the Score's key-terms as guidelines, I devised a structure for the reading of the work, which was based on the presentation and analysis of three simultaneous frameworks:

- the materialist framework, or framework of self-reference – linked to a territory of direct experience, or hands-on action, should indicate the visual-kinetic-tactile-aural 'knowing' about the work, which was recognized either in production or reception;
- the emotional framework, or the framework of the emotion-value, – linked to a territory of reverberations, should indicate the insights and lines of propensity in perception, which singled out an event in the perceptual field, and established it as the initial mark of intensity for the making;
- the conceptual framework, or the framework of the hetero-reference – linked to a territory of conceptual borrowings, should indicate the affinities and differences between the conceptual and the sensorial contents, which are in a state of mutual translation inside the making.

Talking about the making, it is worth noting that none of these frameworks alone can be responsible for the location of meaning or even for the final configuration of the work.

Yet, the three frameworks proved useful to be outlined as discernible instances in the writing, even though, when reading directly from the practice, they continuously kept blurring, one against the other, from within their nebulae of loose interaction.

Initially, this blurring was not a problem for me. I took it more like a healthy sign of rebellion, coming from the intransigency of the work when forced to submit to words...But soon I was asking myself if this 'nebulae of loose interaction' was not a fourth instance, which would be useful to conceptualise, in order to tune the approach I was adopting in writing about my work.

I took a closer, more sympathetic look at the 'nebulae' and realised it had already been conceptualised, inside the Score –this 'nebulae of loose interaction' is a system of relevance, here configured as a three-fold exchange device for the capture and the translation of content.

Therefore, let me attempt to locate the system of relevance in relation to reception, and consequently, to writing. Again, I need to start from its function inside the Score.

The Score describes the creative process as a circuit of repetition that is triggered by an existing mark of intensity and then generates, as a response, the singularity of an artwork. This artwork, will act in the perceptual field as a new mark of intensity, and will affect reception as an autonomous starting point for another creative process, which can be either connected with making a new work or with viewing the existing work.

Inside this circularity of the creative process, which the Score helps to demonstrate, it is at the level of the system of relevance that an interface is built between the creative process's internality – a realm of intimate responsibility about content, and its externality, that is the artwork as shared visibility.



From a viewer's perspective, this work of translation between internality and externality that is done by the system of relevance is what allows reception to become a site for the co-existence of differing readings.

Indeed, those two characteristics: a] being able to accommodate difference in reading; b] being a passage between the internality and the externality of a process, both grant the system of relevance a peculiar quality as a meaning-retrieval device that is useful when:

- analysing the multiple readings of a given practice, happening over time;
- examining how the hetero-reference of a former work is internalized by a maker's creative process and then migrates to the condition of being a self-reference for a subsequent work.

As components of a pattern of inquiry, my four instances seemed to be workable: three frameworks, investigating the practice from different points of view – the material, the emotional and the conceptual, and a fourth reading device – the concept of the system of relevance, which I expected would help me to understand how these frameworks interconnect with each other, inside the work. That is, how they manage to keep their contents in a state of mutual translation.

Yet, there was still a last parameter requiring definition: which was the initial common ground, existing between the practice and the conceptualisation in this research, from where the writing could legitimate its inquiring of the practice?

I used one of the Score's key terms – the mark of intensity, and rephrased the question as: which was the mark of intensity that triggered the double process of practice and conceptualisation for this research? The answer – the perception that the relationship between notions of urban image and issues of otherness were informing installation art's options as an art making – defined how I am addressing the practice for this research: through a questioning of how a relationship between notions of urban image and issues of otherness asserted itself as a system of relevance inside my work, since its early stages until the recent propositions on installation art.

The last point I want to clarify, is that this writing about the practice is being proposed as a third investigative term in the research, happening as a space of evaluation between the practice done and the final conceptualisation.

When constituted as this intermediary space of expression, the writing becomes able to deflect the risk of a theoretical entrapment that would present the practice as illustrative of the concepts. Instead, liberated from the demands of being demonstrative of values, the work can protect what Andrew Benjamin calls its 'capacity for semantic survival'<sup>17</sup>, and still relate to text as an interpretation, which comes not from the work, but as an

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<sup>17</sup> "Signifiante" is linked therefore to survival and the capacity of the object of interpretation to live on. The explanatory exhaustion made possible by the first two levels of meaning [pure information and signification][...] is made possible by the continual presence of 'signifiante'. While the work is always a cultural commodity, and therefore always an object of exchange, its capacity for reinterpretation means that it also has a related though separate existence as an object of actual and potential interpretation. Even though one may inform the other, one is not reducible to the other. This irreducibility – and hence capacity for semantic survival- I would like to call the aura. (Benjamin, A. 1991 p. 146)

Andrew Benjamin is here linking, critically, Barthes' understanding of 'signifiante' with W. Benjamin's conception of the auratic, in an attempt to resolve in the latter an oscillation 'between a negative and positive response to loss', an ambivalence he thinks touch in the issues at play in semantic survival as 'a capacity inherent in the work itself, that is its capacity to have an after-life'. (Benjamin, A. 1991 p. 152)

interpretation that returns to the work, again and again, coming from this third space of expression, which, in the form of multiple readings or writings, exists between the maker, the work and the viewer.

This scenario of meaning as differential truth is precisely what is reaffirmed each time installation activity addresses uncertainty by making the work accessible as a system of relevance.

And if the functioning of the writing was emulating the functioning of an installation, that was also making the writing more transparent as a site of verification for this research's propositions.

## Where I Come From

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### The tranquil object: situations

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#### The material: the 3D object and the 2D reflected light drawing

For nine years, from 1984 until 1993, I developed my work as a series, whose first solo exhibition was titled The Tranquil Object: Situations<sup>18</sup>. This title originated from a remark by Harold Rosenberg on the condition of the modern creation, which is condemned to be an 'anxious object' (Rosenberg, 1970, p.216), as it has to deal with the uncertainty of not knowing if it is art or not.

From inception, I had defined the work in this series as being 'installed objects'. Configured in space, the work would comprise three distinct elements:

- a 3D object, made of wood or metal, having one of its sides covered by a mirror, which was used as a surface to produce reflected light;
- a source of artificial light, which would be focused on the mirrored surface, generating reflected light;
- an exhibition space close to a wall, which would act as a screen receiving the 2D drawing situations, created by the reflected light.

This configuration implied that, prior to any exhibition, I would have in the studio only one third of the work – the mirrored object. Yet,

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<sup>18</sup> O Objeto Tranquilo: Situações (1989), Centro Cultural Cândido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro, BR, solo show.





this single object, when brought into different exhibition sites, would generate different works, responding to the variations in the positioning of the spotlight or to the changes in the relationship of the object to the wall.

Initially, for each exhibition I would choose a fixed configuration for the work, which would remain the same until the last day of public viewing. Being aware of the possibility of different situations for the work would then be a constant provocation for the imagination of the viewer.

This provocation increased with time, as I would stress the work's characteristics of mutability by making some mirrored objects with hinged parts or then configured as a grouping of several parts.

One day the viewers rebelled and managed to make themselves into participants, or better, co-makers of the work. It happened at a group show in the MAM-Rio de Janeiro<sup>19</sup>. As always, I had to have a secluded space in order to be in control of the ambient light. As it was a space in a dark corner of the museum, I used a large typeface to put the name of the work on the wall, at the entrance. The audience took the word 'Situations' in the title, and the isolation of the space, as an invitation or alibi to manipulate the work.

This intervention by the public was not experienced as a disruption, or an undoing of the work, as it happened in a precise moment of my on-going process of learning how to welcome the other inside the making.

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<sup>19</sup> Coleção Cândido Mendes: Dez Anos de Acervo, [1991], MAM , Rio de Janeiro, B. Group show. Curadoria Marcio Doctors.

Existing as an 'installed object', my work would only find completion when inside an exhibition situation. Even though the work would be sometimes almost an index of mobility, I always needed to have at least five days of a configuration in place, in order to be able to understand what I was doing.

I learned about the duration of time I needed for the understanding of the work in situ, directly from the late Orlando Bessa [ \_\_, 1995], a collector and my former gallerist in Rio de Janeiro, who was also, my first rebel viewer. He was very enthusiastic about my work, as he read it as a tool for instantaneous self-expression. Every day, during the solo show I was having in his gallery<sup>20</sup>, he would make small alterations on the positioning of the work. At the time, I was very disturbed by his intervention, but just for five days. I calmed down when I managed to conceptualise my need for a time of understanding, as being an instance of the space being addressed by the work, which I named 'the space of accordance' that is, a space where actions are agreed to happen, or not.

This conceptualisation resolved for me the contradiction between the built-in participatory dimension of the work and the restrictions I was imposing on its manipulation by the public. The exhibition at MAM-RJ was the second time that the work on show was being installed, so no extra time was needed for the understanding of its configuration. So, it was easy to accept the intervention and have it integrated with the materiality of the work. I went back to the museum with the photographer Marcio R. M., who registered what the viewers were doing, as co-makers of the work.

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<sup>20</sup> Objeto In situ [1990] Orlando Bessa Gabinete de Arte, Rio de Janeiro, BR, solo show.



03



04

The emotional: from opposites to apposite presences

The configuration of The Tranquil Object: Situations series still holds, for me, an emotion-value. It is attached to the fact that, in visual art terms, this work is:

- a proposition on conflict, which reads: a] take two elements that are said to be excluding each other, that are said to be *opposites*, as for instance, a 3D object and a 2D reflected light drawing; b] impose no constraint on their differing specificity, and put them side-by-side, as two *apposite* presences; c] facilitate their co-existence in the same space, so as to create a third thing –a situation of interaction;
- a proposition on contextual flexibility, as two thirds of the work is dependent on the context of the exhibition: the positioning of the spotlight over the object, generating the reflected light, and the positioning of the mirrored object in relation to the wall, generating the visibility of the light drawing.

These two propositions are interrelated and complement each other, as both address conflict as something that is not there to be resolved but to be negotiated – differences are different, and unless someone is being pushed into oblivion, they tend to continuously reassert themselves. Yet, if enough attention is given to details and variations, a continuous on-going process of negotiated conflict can bring *opposing* differences into becoming *apposite* presences.

Concerning the use of materials in The Tranquil Object: Situations series, what fascinated me about mirrors as raw



material for the work was the fact that mirrors give back part of the light they receive.

This devolution of the received light is to be found not only in the visibility of the mirror as material surface, or in the visibility of the reflected image this surface captures from its surroundings. Part of the light received by a mirror is shared as light itself. Yet, as reflected light, it is light that has been altered by contact with a material surface – the mirror itself. And this contact has moulded the reflected light into a shape, holding a different texture, only visible when again in contact with another surface (a new intervening screen).

The conceptual: conflict-with-non-exclusion-of-the-other

While developing The Tranquil Object: Situations series, I did an MA in Communication at UFRJ, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

At this time, from 1987 to 1990, as part of the MA research, I reviewed some historical models of resistance to oppression and cultural survival, which the Black Diaspora developed when facing slavery in Brazil. Addressing them as a cultural pattern of behaviour, I divided these models into three configurations, each related to an expected outcome:

- conflict-with-the-exclusion-of-the-other – a belligerent response, which generated revolts (1807, 1809, 1814), insurrections (1835) and fortified 'Quilombos' – free states founded by runaway slaves, deep inside Brazilian highlands;



- conflict-with-the-exclusion-of-the-self – a radical response, peculiar to 'cultures of secrecy' that are organized around rituals of initiation. This model of resistance to oppression would have some enslaved individual committing suicide in the hope of being reincarnated in Africa;
- conflict-with-non-exclusion-of-the-other – an integrative response, derived from a religious understanding of the real as a field of interacting forces (Bastide, 1973). This model of non-exclusion was developed as a strategy of cultural survival during the slavery times. After the end of the slavery, it persisted as a strategy of subsistence, informing tactics of social insertion for the newly liberated black community. Culturally, it is a life-affirming effort of translation and 're-personalisation'<sup>21</sup>, and can be said to be an ambiguous, bittersweet success, as the traces of the oppressed culture ended being celebrated, in modern times, as one of the pillars of the national cultural identity.

By the end of 1989, I had already spent five years working with The Tranquil Object: Situations series and two years researching the Afro-Brazilian models of resistance. One day, while discussing my work with Ricardo Basbaum, an artist, writer and curator from Rio, I suddenly realised, in the middle of our conversation, that this model of conflict-with-non-exclusion-of-the-other, which I recognize runs deeply, as a foundational trace, inside the Brazilian culture, was also the cultural model informing the The Tranquil Object: Situation series, taken as a proposition on conflict.

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<sup>21</sup> 'Repersonalization' (Moura, 1983, p.14) was a survival strategy for the enslaved subject of the Black Diaspora in Brazil. Living in between two distinct communities – master and slaves, black and white, this subject is forced to adapt and learn the games and functions that, in the new culture, will provide alternatives of subsistence and reorganization despite a life as slave.

The system of relevance: proximity by layered accessibility

That early evening conversation in 1989 was an illuminating moment. I had been researching a subject, the Afro-Brazilian models of resistance to oppression, and that was expanding my understanding of the world around me. Simultaneously, I was doing my artwork. But I was carrying out the two activities as if they were unrelated and could be performed in separation from each other. I was surprised to recognize the common ground they shared inside my perceptual field.

Using the concepts I am developing now to evaluate this situation from the past, I would say that the artwork I was doing and the UFRJ research, were both dealing with the same mark of intensity – experiences of conflict, but the system of relevance of the UFRJ research was modulating its proposition on conflict by using a very subtle inflection – it was not only a question of negotiating, but also a question of non-exclusion.

I returned to the UFRJ research essay. In that essay, I proposed a visualisation of the model of 'conflict-with-no-exclusion-of the other', that was based on a study of the social gatherings happening at the house of Tia Ciata. This study, which was done by Roberto Moura (1983) and collaborators, reviewed with care the life-experience subtleties<sup>22</sup> encoded in this iconic example of cultural agency between the black community and the wider society in Brazil.

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<sup>22</sup> The word 'hospitality' derives from the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis*, which originally meant a 'strange' and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or 'hostile' stranger (*hostilis*), + *pets* (*potis, potes, potentia*), to have power [...] 'Hospitality', the welcome extended to the guest, is function of the power of the host to remain master of the premises. [...] The *hopes* is someone who has the power to host someone, so that neither the alterity (*hostis*) of the stranger nor the power (*potential*) of the host is annulled by the hospitality. [...] there is always a little hostility in all hosting and hospitality, constituting a certain 'hostil/pitality'. [...] – how can I graciously welcome the other while still retaining my sovereignty, my mastery of the house? How can I limit my gift? [...] Hospitality really starts to happen when I push against this limit [...] that means it never 'exists', is not 'present', is always to come. (Derrida, 1997 pp. 110-112)

A priestess for the Afro-Brazilian cult of Camdoblé-Nagô, Tia Ciata lived in Rio de Janeiro, from 1876 to 1924. She was a central figure in the newly liberated black community, which was making the passage from a condition of slavery into the hardness of becoming, as a class, the economically dispossessed.

For more than two decades, and happening alongside the main dates of the religious calendar, Tia Ciata's open-house would be a celebratory gathering, sometimes lasting for days, with guests going out to work and coming back in the evening (Moura, 1983 p.66).

When analysing the plan for Tia Ciata's house at Visconde de Itaúna St, the last of the two addresses she had in her adult life, I understood the model of 'conflict-with-no-exclusion-of the other' could be retraced as a collective performance, read directly from the space, just by following the positioning of the various activities on offer to the guests.

As illustrated and commented by Moura (1983), the plan of the house shows a long rectangular single floor, at street level, with the entrance opening directly to the front room. Extending from this front room, to the right, is a large corridor. This corridor, passing three bedrooms and a small lounge area, finishes at the right side of the dining room, beyond which there is the kitchen and a storage space, each located by the right and left side of a large backdoor. This backdoor opens to a small yard.

Even though it is not illustrated in the book, regardless of being commented by Moura, this yard led to a large shed that,





on the appropriate day, was used for the Afro-Brazilian rituals, presided by Tia Ciata.

For the duration of the Tia Ciata's open-house gatherings, the shed would be locked, as a zone of secrecy, inaccessible to the guests. In the yard there would be some drums playing and a group dancing a kind of dance – the jongo, which is sacred for the initiated, but is just a playful game for the non-initiated. In the kitchen, the food that was usually prepared as an offering to the Afro-Brazilian gods, but which is not taken as sacred outside of the rituals, would be served to the guests. In the front room, the musicians brought up in the community, but already with a professional career, would be giving a jam-session, putting together African rhythms and European melodies – and that was samba in the making. Those sessions, due to the musicians rising fame in the city's nightlife, would attract music lovers, coming from all classes and races.

In the functioning of this social gathering, it is easy to see at play the cultural strategy described before as 'a life-affirming effort of translation and re-personalisation'.

As a model or template for cultural strategy this is a sophisticated behavioural design. Its strength comes from being able to accommodate secrecy and open exchange, and to propose them as complementary behaviours, inducing transformations, inside a continuous perceptual field that has different systems of address.

The model achieves this accommodation of differences inside a shared space, by treating its field of action as a conflicted proximity,



which exists between classes and cultures, and nevertheless, can be choreographed into a pattern of interaction by layered accessibility.

In the case of Tia Ciata's house, this model I am naming as 'proximity by layered accessibility' was made visible by the use of two devices, culturally covering a spectrum going from dense to more permeable:

- the nucleus of secrecy, which was marked in the space by the existence of the shed in the backyard with the Afro-Brazilian ritual objects locked away. As an off-limits presence in the events of the day, it was culturally dense to the level of opacity, and would be imprinted in the imagination of the non-initiated guests as an index of the radical alterity of their host;
- the layers of progressive cultural permeability, which were marked in the space by the scattering around the house of the activities of entertainment being offered to the guests. Radiating from the opacity of the shed at the end of the yard, each of these layers of cultural accessibility would be a zone of contact, orchestrated by a singular strategy of interaction. The variations in these strategies are linked to a progression in the levels of cultural permeability – misrecognition for the sacred dance as game-playing in the middle of the yard; re-signification for the food-offering in the kitchen and the dining room; sampling for the musical improvisation in the front room.

When talking about The Object Tranquil: Situations series, from the point of view of a 'proximity by layered accessibility', it becomes

clear that this work is addressing notions of conflict from inside a positioning concerned with issues of otherness.

Also, this description of the strategies in use at the house of Tia Ciata, for orchestrating this model of 'proximity by layered accessibility', can easily be taken as the template of how, for me, the notions of otherness and urban image began to inform each other and started constituting themselves into raw material for my work.

We just need to follow the line of actions crossing the scene. This line starts around a nucleus of secrecy that is an index of the radical alterity of the other – the closed shed. Then it passes through diverse instances of negotiation of differences, which are happening smoothly around the practices of everyday life – sharing a meal or dancing together. Finally, the line arrives at an open-ended game – the music improvisation that is a game of re-invention, made possible by the co-presence of willing partners, which were brought in a state of togetherness by a common belonging-in-difference to a city's life,

This urban camaraderie was the previous condition morphing Tia Ciata's front room into a hybrid space. By mixing the public ethos of a square in the neighbourhood or a corner in the park, with the private cosiness of a friend's house, Tia Ciata's front room was able to offer a well-tuned atmosphere to be used as a facilitator for encounters of difference, or encounters of otherness.

As we shall see, this line of action, this dancing line, sewing together the urban and the self, is also a walking line for my work.

## International Transportable Art: Fair Art for Art Fair

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### The material: performative video installation

In 1991, I was invited by the Galeria SESC Paulista, an art gallery in São Paulo, to take part in a group show commemorating the 100 years of the creation of the Avenida Paulista <sup>23</sup> the central avenue in São Paulo, the largest city in Brazil, which is a city so proud of its accelerated urban life that its motto is 'São Paulo cannot stop'.

International Transportable Art: Fair Art for Art Fair <sup>24</sup>, as a title referred to a willingness to negotiate a conviviality between the work I was presenting and this notion of urban velocity, which I wanted to address as a realm to be inhabited, no matter how transiently. I thought a good template for the work would be street music, which is a performative situation where instantaneity is not an obstacle to intense and rewarding experiences.

Transportable is a performative installation, where a playful and straightforward configuration is disguising an experience meant to unfold in many layers of possible reverberations.

At the Galeria SESC Paulista, in 1991, Transportable occupied two differentiated spaces – a room with no openings



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<sup>23</sup> Homenage à Avenida Paulista [1991] Galeria Sesc Paulista, São Paulo, BR was a group exhibition curated by Elisa Saintive, who put together eight established artists from São Paulo [Anna Barros, Augusto de Campos, Edith Derdyk, Evandro Carlos Jardim, Julio Plaza, Paulo Sayeg and Ubirajara Ribeiro] and an emergent artist from Rio de Janeiro, me, which she got to know through the exhibition at Orlando Bessa Gabinete de Arte.

<sup>24</sup> Transportable will stand for International Transportable Art: Fair Art for Art Fair, when the title appears again in the text.

but a door and a display space just outside this room. Inside the room the public would find:

- seven metal structures that looked like impossible benches – thin rectangles with a mirrored top surface and wheels, having proportions that were calculated in a way they could fit the smaller inside the bigger, like Russian dolls;
- a halogen spotlight generating reflected light from the mirrored top surface in the benches;
- a video camera recording live and broadcasting in real time from the room to a monitor in the display area outside the room.

In the display area outside the room there would be:

- a monitor connected to a video printer and receiving images in real time from the video camera inside the room;
- one-size-fits-all pair of cotton gloves;
- an open metal case, made-to-order with fine finishing by a professional musicians' supplier, which was used to transport the seven bench-like structures all assembled together, one inside the other;
- large vinyl lettering, spelling the work's title on the wall.

Prior to getting inside the room, the willing participant would be invited to wear the pair of cotton gloves. This would prevent the otherwise unavoidable marks of grease on the mirror surface and also suggest an attitude of care and attention.



Inside the room, through direct manipulation of the seven mirrored objects, the participant would create drawing situations with the reflected light projected on the back wall. The video camera would be recording the action and sending images live to the monitor outside the room.

After a light drawing situation was defined, the participant would go outside and check the result in the monitor. Usually they would come back and rearrange their configuration, looking for a better framing inside the monitor's screen. When all the necessary rearrangements were done, a black-and-white image of the final light drawing situation could be printed and taken away by its maker.

#### The emotional: sampling the creative process

Transportable was made as a work expressly belonging to my learning process on how to welcome the other inside the work. As such, it was done as a performative installation where the viewer, or the addressee, is fully acknowledged as a co-maker.

In keeping with this acknowledgement, I wanted access to be granted not only to the work, but to the creative process leading to the work as well. Transportable was then structured as a free sampling of the creative process that provides:

- firstly, a direct experience of an everyday material – mirrors and their reflected light, but with this experience being proposed as a moment of transfiguration for the

usual relation one has with the material – the reflected light becomes a drawing material;

- secondly, an understanding of the artwork as a product of recurring processes of editing and reframing which are applied to a sensorial experience. That was clearly demonstrated by the participants' rearrangement of their reflected light drawings, done straight after they checked the image on the monitor's screen.
- thirdly, an awareness of how a narrative space expands the work's effect in time – the take-away print will be a material support for future conversations, which are a re-enactment of the work in a differentiated perceptual field.

#### The conceptual: the narrative space

In 1989, in Barcelona, I had one of these street music experiences I was referring to, when planning Transportable. I was walking around the medieval town centre, and suddenly, music was in the air. A saxophonist was playing, and the intricacies of his jazzy melodic line was an aural doubling of the narrow twisted medieval streets I had been just absorbing as bodily imprinting. Also, the superimposition of the different cultural times had an intriguing effect on the senses. Later in the day, recalling my experience with a friend, I was told that the musician was a player in The Barcelona Symphonic Orchestra, and he would play in the streets, not only as a form of earning an extra income, but also for pure pleasure.

Transportable was made for São Paulo, which is an immigrant's city with a strong Italian presence. Maybe as a piece of lateral thinking, one of the first references I collected

for the work was the initial scene of Rocco and his Brothers<sup>25</sup>, where the characters are entering Rome by train and comment to each other about the street lights looking like a party. It is a moment of enthusiasm and expectation before all becomes a heart-breaking neo-realist narrative on the familial disruption forced onto the dispossessed, while surviving as an out-cast class on the margins of modern urban life.

Knowing that in São Paulo those powers of capitalist disruption are stronger and cause even more damage, nevertheless I wanted to address that ever-threatened enthusiasm of immigrants, as being a transformative force for the self and its surroundings. Reinforcing this wish, I had another reference for the work that was even more assertive of this approach. It was a fragment of narrative from John dos Passos (1896,1970) the North-American writer, which I read as a teenager and never managed to trace back to its origins. The embarrassing fact that I cannot give a proper academic reference for this fragment did not diminish its staying power in my memory.

This fragment of narrative is a letter and less than a page long. A young Native North-American is writing to his family back on the reserve, saying that after spending the weekend in the nearest town, he will not be able to return home, as something has happened to him and he has become a new person – he saw a carrousel.

Transportable was my first video installation and I was using and offering to the viewer the technology involved in its configuration – the video camera, the monitor, the printer and

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<sup>25</sup> Rocco and his Brothers. (1960). Directed by Luchino Visconti, screenplay by Pasquale Festa Campanile and Suso Cecchi, Italy, Les Films Marceau, Cocinor Productions, Titanus Films, Astor, 172 minutes, B&W, 35mm.

the instantaneous take-away prints, as if it were, similar to the narratives I introduced above, a territory of newly arrived enthusiasm. Yet, in the case of this work, this territory should be truly open to manipulations and personal inputs.

Consequently, the work had a set-up functioning as an arrangement of spaces of interactions, which were referring: a] to the functioning of the creative process as such; b] to the narrative space that enhances the visibility of a work in its contemporary times.

This double intent would organize the interaction with work in two overlapping lines of action:

- the first line of action would give access to the work as being a focused internality, activated by the creative process as a manipulation of materials. As a sequence, these actions would go from the direct experimentation, with the reflected light from the mirrored objects, to the formalisation of a light drawing on the wall and the framing of an image on the monitor;
- the second line of action would give access to the work as dispersed externality, activated by the creative process as narration. As a sequence, these actions would refer to: a] events that happened prior to the engagement of the work by the viewer, as the naming of the work, shown in the lettering on the wall, and the transporting of the objects, indicated by the metal case; b] events happening during the engagement of the work by the viewer, as the registering and the archiving of images (with the take-away print); c] events happening



after the engagement of the work by the viewer, as a possible future conversation over the take-away print .

Having the work installed in space expanded my understanding of this dimension of the narrative space, as a site in the future for an autonomous re-enactment of the work. I realised it was not just a possibility bound to happen sometime in the elsewhere. This narrative space was actually a durational action, starting in the presence of the work, by the interaction around the take-away print.

This print was an ambiguous way of incorporating the after-life of the work as a conversation piece, as it would facilitate a situation of dissemination for work, where meaning would be re-enacted in a future time, but independent of any renewed in-put from the maker. The work, in this situation, would be relying on a trace – the print, and also on the willingness and the narrative talents of its former viewer. That moment would be a kind of threshold, as the work would be finding closure as intended conversation piece, but at the same time, as a 'thing' or presence of meaning, it would be starting a new sequence of gestures of conviviality and shared memories, entirely belonging to an elsewhere.

Conceptually, Transportable started as a respondent to my previous learning on the 'space of accordance' – it was a performative installation orchestrating a transient moment that would open up to multiple instances of self-expression for the viewer. A new issue was added, when I realised that the work's after-life as a conversational piece, was in fact a performative proposition related to the understanding of meaning as deferral, that is (as I would say now), meaning as function of an afterwardness.

The system of relevance: dreams of proximity

The Gallery SESC Paulista is a gallery at street level, and besides the exhibition attracting an audience from the art world, most of their visitors are everyday pedestrians, taking a break from going about their business up and down the Avenida Paulista.

It was rewarding to witness the public's playfulness when interacting with Transportable. In a way, 'the dancing line' present at Tia Ciata's house was there as well. This line would come from the room with the mirrored objects, would then pass by the moments of re-invention through framing and registering, which were happening in the display area, and finally would expand over the streets with the take-away prints and future conversations.

In this sequence of actions, the work was shifting and dislocating the site of meaning as an attempt to capture and incorporate the urban, perceived as a space of expansion and indeterminacy, that is, a space of chance encounters where the urban translates as a dream of proximity opening up new possibilities for self-expression.

This tension, or maybe longing, happening between an internality [of the work] and an externality (of the urban image) informed, at least, another two of my installations from this period: Object in Situ: the narrative space and Data Display

Object in Situ: the narrative space<sup>26</sup> was an installation comprising three sites. In the first space, before the exhibition, a work was

<sup>26</sup> Object in situ was in the group show S\_6 (1992), Orlando Bessa Gabinete de Arte, from 7 to 30 November and also had been selected for the XV Salão Carioca de Arte (1992), EAV, running from 9 November to 15 December.



installed in seven different positions inside the gallery, but just the photographs of this event were on display during the group show. Simultaneously, the same work was installed and display as part of another group exhibition, in a second gallery, twenty minutes away by car. A special edition of an art journal was published as a catalogue for this second show. On my page I had published the two galleries addresses, an artist's statement and a draft map of a dancing line (again...), indicating how to get from one place to another. This urban space in between the two galleries was the third space being activated by the installation. Though the duration of the two exhibitions overlapped by just two weeks, the site where I was locating the meaning of the work was in the experience of a possible viewer, that, by going to both places in the same day, would combine the immersion in the urban space (as a place of indeterminacy) with the viewing inside the galleries (as a place of precise orchestration). This positioning of meaning was clearly stated on my page in the art journal. Yet, the work demanded no verification of the viewer's performance, and the period before and after the overlapping were accommodated inside the proposition as a factor of chance – when I devised the work I could not be sure I would be selected for the second show, let alone be able to negotiate the dates. This open-ended configuration had an internal coherence, as the work was addressing the levels of chance and control that exist in the relationship work/world.

Data Display<sup>27</sup> was an installation in a gallery that has a large glass window at street level. The installation comprised four stations of events, each located close to one of the room's walls and each assigned a large metal arrow and a letter. The metal arrow would

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<sup>27</sup> Data Display (1993), Galeria Cândido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro, BR, solo show.





have the effect of creating a loop for the dislocation of attention between the stations. The first station was made of two white cubes with mirrored tops, fixed on the wall. The second was the attendant's desk that had been altered by placing a large mirror on its flat surface and a spotlight overhead. The mirrored tabletop would project a reflected light in a trapezoidal shape on the nearest wall. Inside this area of reflected light on the wall, the stationary objects and the attendant's daily gestures were outlined as if they were Shadow Theatre figurines. The third station was a signatures' canvas, which was acting as a visitor's book, and was a work-in-progress to be completed just at the end of the show, when signed by the last visitor. Finally, the fourth station was the gallery's window, included in the installation as a work on its own right. The window would flood the installation, which was mainly a black/grey/white affair, with a myriad of colours, and the shifts in daily light and passing street events. This urban multiplicity was included as part of the installation, by the positioning on the wall of half a sentence, made of metal lettering. This sentence was running on the wall at eye level, and would stop close to the window. The half sentence read 'A RUA É...' (the street is...). On the opening night, João Modé, an artist from Rio de Janeiro and a friend, called my attention to the reflection on the glass window of the reversed sentence, which was then reading as '... É AUA' <sup>28</sup>.

Here, an observation. This reflection on the window would be perfect justification, coming from the practice, to introduce Walter Benjamin's writings on the aura and on the work of Baudelaire

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<sup>28</sup> The full sentence in Portuguese is 'A rua é uma unidade pedagógica', which translates in English as 'The street is a pedagogic unit'. It is a proposition by Roland Corbisier, a Brazilian philosopher. As a reference, it comes from a lecture, held during the late seventies at the Architecture College of the Universidade Santa Ursula, in Rio de Janeiro, BR.



(Benjamin, W., 1973a and 1973b). I could affirm them as a direct reference for this installation. But this reversed sentence happened as a chance event, and though the accomplished fact adapted perfectly to a theory I had access to, this was still a chance event and not a fact orchestrated as a respondent to a well-known conceptual framework.

This reversed sentence surfaced in the work, coming from a common realm of fascination – the urban, which, as an object of contemporary perception, is contaminated by Benjamin's and Baudelaire's work. Consequently, this zone of contamination, or this diffuse imprinting of reference onto the perceptual field, is what should be accounted for as the reference for Data Display. This is an important point to be highlighted, for the work I am doing here in writing for understanding, in visual art terms, is how a system of relevance builds up inside a making that is a balancing act between options of intense commitment and facts of chance.

Data Display closed a cycle in my practice. After this installation I did only two more of these works using mirrors and reflected light. They were very silent works, literally standing against the wall, calmly fighting for their corner. Doing them was like being quiet for a while, as a form of saying goodbye. Both works were framed mirrors I had sent to be sandblasted, but still kept a thin line showing as mirrored surface. They were to be hung in a corner of a room, under a spotlight, allowing the mirrored line to project a reflection onto the neighbouring wall.



Thinking back, these works were a kind of premonitory self-portrait for my next decade, the time I made my self into a foreigner.

This decade started in 1994, the year I came to London in order to begin an MA in Fine Art at the Goldsmiths College, University of London. Previously, I had been invited to teach at Parque Lage, a school of visual arts in Rio de Janeiro. I really enjoyed the experience of discovering myself as a facilitator to other artists' practices. I had graduated in architecture and knew, from personal experience, that art and architecture have different creative processes, I mean, they have a different relationship with external constraints. I thought it would be interesting to experience, from the position of being a student, how the arbitrariness of an art process is made to comply with an institutional pedagogy. Also, as I had closed a cycle in my work, it seemed a right moment to go abroad.

I spent two years applying for grants, finally got one, and then came to London, where the experience of living in a new urban context morphed into a process of self-othering.

I will analyse only one of the works I did during this period, addressing this experience. It is titled Anagram. I will put it in context by reproducing here, in italics, some revised fragments of the text 'Where am I? Who am I?'. They belong to the second chapter of my essay 'Fast Travel Notebook', which was submitted for the MA degree in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College in 1995.

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*To come to a new place in order to live and work is obviously a totally different experience from just travelling and staying in places for a while. I understand now that my initial [MA] project<sup>30</sup> was based on that fast collecting of impressions overwhelming the traveller's eyes. But staying in a new place for [at least] one year means learning things you have already learnt at home as a child: words, gestures, behaviour, relevance. It is a kind of regression in the process of cultural constitution of the self in face of the other.*

*Maurice Blanchot, as quoted by Zigmunt Bauman, says the encounter with the other, when taken as an ethical relationship, should be based on 'attention', which is:*

*[...] not an effort, tension, nor mobilisation of knowledge around a certain thing with which one is preoccupied. Attention waits. It waits without haste, leaving empty what is empty and avoiding but the haste, the impatient desire and, even more, the horror of the void that prompts us to fill the emptiness prematurely. [Bauman, 1993 p. 87]*

*We can couple this purpose of attention and waiting with the reading of the cinematic image made by Deleuze [1992]. Taking*

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<sup>29</sup> 'Instead of sounding himself as to his "being", he does so concerning his place: "Where am I?" instead of "Who am I?" For the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, is never one, nor homogeneous, nor totalizable, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic. A deviser of territories, languages, works, the deject never stops demarcating his universe whose fluid confines \_ for they are constituted of a non-object, the abject \_ constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh. A tireless builder, the deject is in short a stray. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of the danger, of the loss that the pseudo-object attracting him represents for him, but he cannot help taking the risk at the very moment he sets himself apart. And the more he strays, the more he is saved.' (Kristeva, 1980 p.8).

<sup>30</sup> My initial MA project was to rework in the studio a visual event that would be selected by its staying power in memory as a personal marker, that is, a visual event that was able to open a territory of meaning I could refer to, and feel connected with, in my new urban context, London.

*cinema as a field of events, he pointed out that in the first phase it deals with a movement-image turned to produce narration, not out of an inevitability but because it took as its object the sensorimotor schema – '[...] the hero, in a given situation, reacts: the hero always know how to react [...]'. This is a schema Deleuze acknowledges to be fundamentally American, forming the basis of the Hollywood cinema. This structure of action and reaction could no longer, in the post-war situation, be sustained by the spectator's belief. There you get to understand Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave and the American Cinema with its new phase of '[...] purely optical and aural situations, which give rise to completely novel ways of understanding resisting [...]'. There is still movement in images but the purely optical and purely aural yield to the time-image has nothing to do with succession, or the law of linear narrative, but with '[...] new forms of coexistence, ordering, transformation'. [ Deleuze, 1992 p.p 281-294]*

*Attention and waiting seem to be a suitable approach when dealing with purely optical and aural situations, where the code for how to act and react has vanished and the perception of a contiguity between events cannot be based on succession, but maybe, on the gathering of the 'units of atmosphere', being ordered into co-existence alongside a subject's transformation. This assembling leads to a new kind of space based on neighbourhoods, '[where] the connections between one small part and another is made in an infinite number of possible ways, and is not predetermined [...] but joined together in a 'tactile way' [McDonough, 1994 pp. 59-77].*



*It is clear from that explanation that the verbal is put aside in favour of the aural, the optical and the tactile presented as better tools for dealing with ambiguity and instability. Maybe when I came to a foreign country to speak in a language I had not mastered very well, I was in some way suppressing the verbal good command and looking for a transformation out of the inevitable reordering of the self that comes from new forms of coexistence. It was like I was acting a sort of scene of 'the missed encounter' [Krauss, 1994, p.72].*

*[...]*

*Guattari [1992] talking about collective apparatus of subjectification in Western societies distinguishes three series he calls path/voices: the first is a path/voice of power over territorialities; the second is a path/voice of a deterritorialised mode of knowledge and the third is a path/voice of a creative transforming of the self-reference. The latter is the path/voice that anchors human realities in finitude, the one that effects the most dazzling crossing between heterogeneous domains. A 'universe of virtuality', it is also the best endowed with lines of processuality and [as such it is] the place of subjectification as process, as an on-going individual and social practise of self-valorisation and self-organisation. This third path/voice is a 'historical zone' being actualized nowadays in major cities<sup>31</sup>.*

*That is why opening oneself to [long journeys of discovering in a foreigner] major city can turn out to be a merging [...] into a process of re-subjectification [...] where connections are made in an*

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First: Paths/voices of power circumscribing and circumventing human groupings from the outside, either through direct coercion of, and panoptic grip on, bodies, or through imaginary capture of minds.

Second: Paths/voices of knowledge articulating themselves with technoscientific and economics pragmatics from within subjectivity.

Third: Paths/voice of self-reference developing a processual subjectivity that defines its own coordinates and is self-consistent [...], but can nevertheless establish transversal relations to mental and social stratifications. (Guattari, 1992 p.19)

*infinite number of possible ways through and over a wedge of opacity, in a movement that allows new contents to be included, contaminating the older ones.*

## Anagram

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Anagram is a five-channel sound and video installation that was done in 1996. It was presented as a practice for the period of three months as a research associate to Goldsmiths College, which I undertook soon after finishing the MA<sup>32</sup>, in order to prepare the project for this present PhD research.

The material: five-channels, four videos and a sonic layer

Anagram is an installation that used two projectors, three monitors and an ambient sound to orchestrate its space in layers of immersion.

In entering the exhibition space<sup>33</sup>, the viewer would face a wall-to-wall projection showing three circular shapes, placed in an irregular formation. Inside each one of the shapes, there would be an image of a payphone, or an art magazine pinned on a board, or the fragment of a door and its keyhole. All the images had the same background, making it clear that these were cut-outs from a single scene.

On the same wall, aligned with the floor and using the area left free by the cut-outs, a small projection was visible with a monitor positioned at its right side. The monitor's screen formed a 105° angle with the

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<sup>32</sup> I was awarded an MA Distinction in Fine Arts, for the presentation of a final exhibition and essay that both had the same title – Fast Travel Notebook.

<sup>33</sup> In this case, the Swimming Baths Studios' Project Room, at Goldsmiths College.

small projection, turning these two moving-image surfaces into something like pages of an opened light-book. Both the small projection and the monitor were presenting the same fixed-camera single-take, video image of a digital editing suite, which operated with two monitors.

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On close inspection, the viewer would discover that the large cut-outs were part of the scene that was being shown in the small projection and also on the monitor screen. More precisely, the cut-outs came from the video image that was running on the editing suite's right monitor, as a detail inside the scene being screened and projected as pages of an open light-book.

Usually the viewer, when entering the room, would get close to the projection wall. In doing so, not only the internal relationship between the images would become obvious, but also, the difference in texture for each of the surfaces sustaining the video-images – the wall underneath the large and the small projections, and the glowing monitor screens.

After a short while absorbed in these visual details, the viewer's attention would begin to wander around the space and two other monitors would be spotted at the back of the room, alongside the entrance wall. Both monitors were half-turned to the wall. Consequently the wall was tinted by a moving glow coming from the screens. To know what was on the screen the viewer needed to get in close proximity by crossing back to the other side of the room.

After engaging in this wandering (as a gestural), the viewer would discover that glowing monitors that were present in the installation



as real objects in the space, were showing the same video work as the two monitors, which were present just as moving images, inside the scene recorded in the editing suite, which was being screened/projected on the wall across the room.

A final element in the installation was a recurring sound of running water – a receptacle being filled up and emptied. It functioned as a sonic layer, or virtual pathway, accommodating and guiding the displacement of the viewer's attention throughout the installation.

### The emotional: endurance

The initial raw material for Anagram, from where the cut-outs were taken, was a video footage filmed in the studio I shared at college, during my MA studies. The footage was made using a fixed camera that was set up at the studio's entrance, framing a wall. Originally, this footage was taken very late at night as a sound recording of the payphone's ring tone. The sound was intended as a sound track for another video work<sup>34</sup>, and I had no intention of using it as imagery. Yet, as I was setting up the camera as a sound recording device, framing the scene properly was an automatic action.

I did not use the payphone sound, as the Getting in Touch video I would be sound-tracking with it, imposed itself on me as a silent work. I just discovered it, this silent vocation, when bringing the two videos together in the editing room. But while still deciding whether to give up the sound, I had enough time to look at the studio footage as imagery. I then began to see my casual framing as generating a meaningful fragment. Taking an 180° turn in strategy, I ended by overlaying this image with a circular mask effect, which isolated

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<sup>34</sup> Getting in Touch (1995) Maria Moreira, London, 10min loop, VHS.



those three points of attention from their background: the art magazine, the payphone and the door's keyhole.

Also, at the time, I was interested in what happens to an image when it passes through different technologies with distinct grades of visual quality. I would, for instance, start with a snapshot of my own hands, photocopy it on acetate, enlarging its size, then photograph it using a slide film, project the result on a wall, record the projection in S-VHS, load the footage on a computer and make a quick time movie out of it. Throughout the process the image would lose qualities and this loss would imply a new texture being added. I would call it endurance – this capacity the image was showing of gain through loss. I was also identifying the process of passing through different technologies with the experience of undergoing the pressures of contemporary urban life.

So, when I saw the two videos side-by-side in the editing room, and the studio footage asserted itself as imagery in its own right, I decided to film the editing suite, which implied I was re-filming both videos.

The thinking Anagram brings into visibility, about scale, proximity, texture and listening, all unfolds from this take on the endurance of the contemporary image as an open metaphor for urban living.

#### The conceptual: a purely optical and purely aural situation

Conceptually, Anagram is a respondent to the framework introduced here by the fragments of the text Where am I? Who am I. It is a purely optical and aural situation happening

outside the law of linear narrative. Also the space this situation creates is not a demonstrative space but a space based on neighbourhoods, joined together in a tactile way. The tactile, as a vague index of a bodily imprint, is present in the work, firstly through the plays of proximity and distancing introduced by alterations in scale, and secondly through the different textures happening between projected and emitted light and also between moving images and pure zones of light.

Starting from a metaphoric connection between: a] (what I call) a quality of endurance in image, when submitting (and responding) to different technologies of reproduction, and b] the processes of re-subjectification imposed on the self by contemporary urban living, we could then read Anagram as a cityscape<sup>35</sup>. It offers itself to the viewer as an oversized postcard, yet its actual function is to foreground a small network of hidden spots and intricate connections, whose possible meaning will be revealed just through an engagement over time.

Treating Anagram's imagery as a structure of self-reference, allowed the installation to inform perception as an exercise on recognizing imprints of difference inside a given sameness. This approach reverberated Guattari's concept of the 'third path/voice of creative transforming self-reference' (Guattari, 1992, pp 19-

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<sup>35</sup> An alternative title for this installation, that I used sometimes when referring to it in portfolios, was 'Studium Life', after Barthes's concept of 'studium' which he defines as:

an extent, it has the extension of a field, which I perceive quite familiarly as a consequence of my knowledge, my culture; [...]. I did not know a French word which might account for this kind of human interest, but I believe this word exists in Latin: it is *Studium*, which doesn't mean, at least not immediately, 'study', but application to a thing, taste for someone, a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment, of course, but without special acuity. (Barthes, 1980 pp. 25-26).

The fact that Anagram asserted itself as the appropriate title for this installation, is just symptomatic of a will to highlight the connections between urban experience and process of re-organization of the self.

20) forming what he calls a 'historical zone' being actualized nowadays in major cities.

The system of relevance: running water and zones of attention

Anagram was the first installation where I used sound as raw material. This sound – water running in and out of a receptacle – was addressed as a bringing into experience of a circular time. This sonic layer, allowing for such circularity to be accessed as a bodily imprint, was intended as a perceptual device in the task of breaking down the linearity in the sequences of connected visual events.

I indicated before how the zones of attention, or spaces of interaction, inside Transportable were following the 'dancing line' present in the sequences of activity on offer in Tia Ciata's house. In Transportable, the areas of activity would go from an internality – the manipulation of the mirrored objects, towards an externality – the streets and the future conversation.

Similar zones inside Data Display, though already referring to each other in a circular structure, were still self-contained instances, whose positioning could respond to a sequential reading.

The zones of attention inside Anagram, behaved in a different way – they folded one over the other, building up a small network of connections that were to be made in a number of possible ways. Afterwardness, as a locus of meaning making, was dislocated from the externality to the internality of the work and any possible sequential reading would have to surrender to a certain number of retracing movements across the room.

Anagram was then creating a situation, where re-evaluation, in thinking, translated as retracing movements, in action.

From the point of view of the relationship in my practice between notions of urban image and issues of otherness, this space of translation, or space of afterwardness, when made visible inside Anagram, was in fact enlisting the viewer as performer. That means, the viewer was given the task of doubling, inside the work, the experiences I was having in the world, as a foreigner in a major city, or what I would now name as my process of self-othering.

As my reading of the former work is becoming increasingly informed by my present framework, I shall now introduce the practice developed for this PhD research.

## Fieldwork

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To facilitate the assessment of the practice for this research, I am dividing it in three groups of work: a] grounding devices: productive actions established as triggers for an engagement with specific activities that are meant to happen on a continuous basis, for a certain period of time (as it is the case with a new studio practice, or even the writing of a thesis); b] studio works: three installations developed for spaces at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (CSM), in Charing Cross Road; c] Chance Encounter Portfolio: a DVD collection of digital movies which are meant to function as 'active space insertions'. As such, these digital movies are expected to adapt to any context of reception. They should be



able either to disperse in space as large wall-to-wall moving image installations, or reversely, to contract into the condition of being a portfolio-based installation activity, which is dependent for its realisation on the viewer wanting to spend some time in front of a monitor, making use of a DVD player.

### Grounding devices

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When I joined CSM as a full-time research student coming from abroad, an initial problem was the lack of a studio space on a permanent basis. At college, different spaces were made available for periods of eight weeks at a time. In order to be productive in these short periods of occupation, I needed to accelerate the ripening time required for adapting to each new surrounding, again and again.

Therefore, as soon as I entered a new space, in the very first week, I would start some activities to help me find a feeling of being grounded, not only in this new place, but also, grounded back in the practice that had been interrupted by transferring from one studio to another.

As a response to the anxiety of being inserted in a new transitory situation, developing the grounding devices as a notion was useful not only as a tactic facilitating my beginnings in the studio, but also when appropriating the urban environment as an outside working space, and during the writing of the thesis.

As a studio practice facilitator, the notion of grounding devices prompted the creation of three different types of work:

- the axial - works that create a kind of axis in the space, founding a 'here'. They are meant to generate a demand for daily visits to the studio, where they should establish a visibility since the first week of occupation. Examples developed were works with plants, that needed to be watered, and works made using morning urine samples, collected on the first and the last day of the initial week of occupation, which is the period when the specificity of a place began to react with one's system, and the initial anxiety began to fade away;
- the obsessional - works with a processual character, based on repetition and immediacy, meant to be undertaken for a long period of time. They offer the comfort of a known action, an 'always', which is there to be done again and again, whenever one goes to the studio. As such, they displace the maker's attention from any anxiety about interrupted productivity. This allows the practice to be reconnected as a flow. Examples developed were works made using puzzles or a manipulated bed sheet;
- the migratory - works to be done as a version belonging to a series. They are meant as a manoeuvre of continuity, allowing the initial production happening in a new space to be incorporated inside a previous flow of work. Their central tactic implies taking a 'migratory object', that is, an object already used in a former work, and bringing it to interact with the new place. These works relate to the two previous types by putting together the 'here', of the axial,



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with the 'always', of the obsessional. Examples were done with elements used before in my practice, such as a wax casting or a specific snapshot, or even small items for daily use like glasses, pencils, model-making figurines, two pence coins, paper clips, etc.

As a facilitator for the writing, the notion of grounding devices informed the creation of:

- the layered diagram, which was useful in the initial stages of the research. As a writing device, it organized content by indicating the clusters of affinity and the sequential connections between them. That means, when showing content in the form of a layered diagram, each cluster of affinity is presented in a different sheet of acetate. These acetates, or layers, when held separately, allow the internal connections of the diagram to be accessed step-by-step, or to be understood by sectors. This mobility of the layers brings flexibility to the overall perception of a subject matter, and new connections are made visible;
- the playing cards, which were useful at the final stages of the research as practice, before the final writing began. They were a standard pack of playing cards, with printed adhesive labels added on the back, each referring to one of the research's main topics. The pack was used in a narrative action where the cards were arranged on a table, one by one, while I explained the content of each label, and highlighted the connections between them. This way, the flow of a speech-act overlaid the diagrammatic positioning of



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the cards on the table. As an experience of fluidity, when presenting the research's content, it was very liberating.

When engaging with the urban environment as a working space, the notions of grounding devices and urban drift contaminated each other, generating four works. Three of them – Missing Words, Semi-requested, and Getting in Touch, were developed as part of the London Biennale 2000, the collaborative group event created by David Medalla<sup>36</sup>. The fourth – Unattended, had a presentation, in 2000, at the group show The Rest of the Story, curated by Hana Sakuma<sup>37</sup> as part of her research project, at Chelsea College of Art and Design:

- Missing Words was a work on the possibility of random contact inside the overlapping public spaces of the virtual city and the real city. I placed some stickers around gathering places in London, like Hoxton Square, Soho Square and Coldharbour Lane in Brixton. The stickers had spare words, asking for messages to be sent to an email address – missingwordslondon@yahoo.com. Those words were chosen randomly from a dictionary by some of the artists attending the initial meetings of the London Biennale 2000, held in June at the bookshop Borders, Charing Cross Road, just across the road from CSM. One month after the placement of the stickers,

<sup>36</sup> The London Biennale was founded in 1998 by David Medalla [the London based Transmedia artist, born in the Philippines in 1942, and a pioneer of Kinetic art, Land art and Participatory art]. It evolved into an artist community loosely based around London and the Biennial events that take place there. Totalling over 150 artists, the members of the Biennale are involved in off-shoot projects and there is continuous activity around the Biennale nucleus [...][The London Biennale, 1998]

Medalla sees this as a do-it-yourself biennial. There's no building or office or bureaucracy. It's up to artists to find a venue and funding for their shows: The venues can be anywhere, from someone's front room to a gallery, from a cemetery to a boat on the Thames. The idea is for the artists -and the art-going public- to delve into London's complex and heterogeneous fabric as much as possible. [...] [Guy Brett, 2000]

<sup>37</sup> Hana Sakuma is a London-based artist and curator.





I still had no message. I then discovered that the password had being changed and I could not remember the fake details of the persona I invented when creating the email address. My Missing Words virtual-urban-contact project became a 'missing encounter' experience. If I were to re-edit the project, I would take the opposite approach – instead of placing removable stickers all around the rails, like I did in Hoxton Square, in a single early morning, I would disperse the stickers sparsely around town, over a long period of time, and just let them do the work of capturing attention, at their own discreet pace;

- Semi-requested was a collaborative work. The art collective Foreigner Investment<sup>38</sup> was taking part in The London Biennale, and invited 'everyone' to participate in the public concert Tuning-in. All one needed to do was to bring a radio to Piccadilly Circus, at 5:00 pm, on 30 June 2000. The proposal sounded very interesting to me, as conceptually the concert could be taken as a sonic dispersal including every broadcasted sound being produced, at that precise moment, around the world. The concert would act then as a casual marker, transiently positioning the sounds of the world in layers of proximity, around its site of density as emission in Piccadilly Circus. I was told I could not join the concert just by singing and as I did not have a radio, I hired a cab, asked the driver to put the radio on, and went




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<sup>38</sup> foreign investment is the collaborative work of artists, gamblers and accountants. The group has been trading as a division of UNIVERSAL ART since 1996. foreign investment is the world's only distributor of shared authenticity, and is fast becoming one of the best established living financial art works in the Northern Hemisphere. foreign investment has developed a reputation for elaborate and uncompromising interventions. foreign investment blends cultural capital, exchange, commercial adventure, outrage and travel. foreign investment has performed internationally, amongst it at the Venice Biennale, the Istanbul Biennale, and from Rio de Janeiro to New York.' (Foreign Investment, 1996)

around Piccadilly, at around 5:00 pm, taking pictures while passing by. Therefore, I took part in the first movement of the concert – *molto agitato (very nervous): make your way to the Piccadilly 'eros' with your radio switched on;*

- Getting in Touch is the name of the first video I did as part of my MA course in 1995. It was incorporated as a migratory object to my contribution to the London Biennale 2000. It is a silent work. The image shows a series of wax castings from my hand, melting away inside a hot wax pan. The pan itself is not visible, as the image was edited, leaving just a coloured circle floating against a black background. Getting in Touch was presented at the very end of a video show reel, during the London Biennale closing event at Gallery 291 in August 2000. Gallery 291 is a converted church, and when some percussionists were already beginning to play, Getting in Touch, as the last video on show, started being projected on the back wall of what once was the altar, and still remains an authoritarian position in the stage-audience relationship. Yet, everyone was looking in the other direction, towards the musicians. Some people began to dance, and the video went on, as an unnoticed 'moon'. I liked the experience very much. The video was there, not controlling the audience, but still being part of the scene, as a discreet blessing.

- Unattended was a work about 'thought energy' as raw material. It started with a small series of photographs I had taken of five different homeless people sleeping rough in the streets. It was important they were sleeping and that I could not see their faces, as I wanted to capture their presence, from inside a



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situation of human vulnerability, without fixing their identity. I printed these photographs on a small card, with the words 'unattended artwork' on the reverse. The cards were attached to a metallic balloon, filled with helium. The balloon was to stay in a sheltered space – studio, house or exhibition place, for at least five days. During this time, the balloon's mirrored surface would keep on reflecting the surroundings and whoever came around. After the five days the balloon was to be taken back to the street shown on the card, where it was to be released, taking up to the skies the charge of 'thoughts as raw material', it managed to collect during the period it had stayed indoors. I did only two versions of these thought-collection work – one placing the balloon, with the photo of the Soho Square sleeper, at the studio I was using in CSM at Charing Cross Road, the second placing the balloon, with the photo of the Kings Cross Road sleeper, at the Chelsea College's group show. I never managed to develop the Unattended project as a portfolio with a large number of photos of street dwellers. I did the first series of five sleepers and stopped shooting. Something was holding me back from adopting, with this subject, the approach of a collecting methodology, akin to the 'ethnographic turn'<sup>39</sup> in contemporary art. It took me a while to understand that I did not need a series, as the series [which is always an attempt to sustain meaning in deferral] had already been interrupted by the gestural captured in the double snapshot I had taken of the Greek Street sleeper. The sleeper in Greek Street was the only one of my five street dwellers that

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<sup>39</sup> ...] what Hal Foster (1996) has described as the 'ethnographic turn' in art and art-theoretical discourse[...] Foster's use of the term 'ethnographic' is somewhat loose, for he does not imply the entire edifice of institutionalised ethnography, but rather a privileging of cultural alterity. (Matthew, 2000 p. 139)

I photographed twice. Without seeming to be wake, he changed his position between the shots. First he was in a position of complete abandonment of himself – he had rolled out of his sleeping bag and was on his back, directly on the pavement, arms opened. When I took the first picture, without opening his eyes, he crossed his arms, as if ready to stand his ground. He gave me the key for the work. From the condition of being a remainder, he asserted himself as a reminder. Living in a situation of social fall, the sleeper still assigned himself a social function – he is a reminder of the fact that something is 'out-of-joint' in our contemporary life. He enacts in public the hidden pain of a human fear – to have the force of personal desire dissolved into oblivion. The work found a discursive voice through the sleeper's gestural, as he was acting as the:

[...] one that returns 'shit', the remainder, to productive use. Essentially, if otherness is indeed what enables a coherent discursive position to take place, then what is excluded as 'other' is not marginal but the occulted presence at the very heart of any discourse [...] (Fisher, 2002, p. 67)




Four installations were done as studio works for this research, each in a different space at CSM, in Charing Cross Road: The Welcome Enigma, February 2000, was done in the Thinking Box 01, Gulliver's Children, March 2000, in the Thinking Box 02, Passing By, September 2002, which was an intervention in the Library Board, and The Reminder, September 2002, sited on the Viewing Theatre rooftop.

The Welcome Enigma and Gulliver's Children were each done at one of the two studios I was offered for one term in 2000. They were both small spaces that should be available to other students, if they needed them. Therefore, instead of using these rooms as a working studio, I nicknamed them The Thinking Box and proposed it could be used as a project space to be booked for two weeks, at a time.

  
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Both installations addressed their rooms as an archival space for grounding devices that had migrated from other configurations. Additionally, in both installations, certain new works were there in the space as if in a situation of condensed display, just waiting for their possible expansion into a larger format. That was the case of the soil dispersion – an arrangement of a certain quantity of soil, placed on the floor, and used as a drawing material, to be rearranged every day, by gestures of sweeping.

Passing By, as a configuration, followed the same approach as The Welcome Enigma and Gulliver's Children – the library board was treated as an archival space, which used images as

  
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grounding devices for incidental attention. The work completed itself with the moving bodies and the images' after-effect, in the memory of the passer-by.

The Reminder, was an installation derived from the Unattended project. It did not come to completion as expected. A number of delays, as in the permission from health and safety and in the delivery of materials, forced the work into becoming an open-studio experience. Nevertheless, the experience of rescuing the work from total failure, through an effort of adapting to conditions and incorporating accidents, was the one that, in this research, clarified for me how the emotion-value builds a system of relevance.



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The Reminder was projected as a site-specific installation for the Viewing Theatre rooftop at CSM, in Charing Cross Road. The main features of the space being addressed were:

- the remainder of an attached house, visible on a lateral wall, over the roof;
- the stairs leading to the annex building, which are an ascendant passage, lateral to the roof;
- the four Viewing Theatre's skylights, which have a shape reverberating oversized domestic furniture, like tables or beds;
- the proximity to Greek Street, where I took the snapshot of the sleeper's gestural I was calling The Reminder.

The materials brought into this space were:

- two blue cotton king size sheets [they have a square shape], which were held in place by steel cables and iron weights,

forming different shapes (bed-table and tent) over the two skylights at the back of the rooftop ;

- two wood panel doors, painted blue, with both sets of the double panels replaced by two large acetate inkjet prints, showing on each door the Greek Street sleeper in his different positions.

The problems addressed in The Reminder as open-studio activity were:

- the strength of the wind, which until the very end blew the sheets out of shape;
- the lack of a sense of visual flow between the elements present in space, which in the beginning was blocking the installation coming into being.

For the first problem, I found no solution. And that was probably the solution. If I were to reinstall the work, I would address the wind as raw material, and not as a problem. For the second problem, the finding of a solution was a process of learning the work from inside out.

This second problem was two folded. First, the doors facing the passing audience divided the installation space in two mutually excluding zones of attention, which were: a] the images visible in front of the doors; b] the rest of the space, beyond the doors, which became an ungraspable grey zone. Second, the doubling of the images on each door, instead of bringing visibility to the sleeper's gestural, just blurred his entire figure into the condition of being a rhetorical pattern.

These disruptive effects were visible from the start, but their full articulation as problems, and the configuration of a possible solution, surfaced just through a physical interaction with the elements comprising the installation. That is, it surfaced through a gestural, [...] 'the rather dumb physical activity of stalking the drawing [...] raising, shifting, adapting the image' (Christov-Bakargiev, 1998 p 93), which was an action happening in a '[...] strange space of back-and-forth, at once mechanical and meditational ' (Krauss, 2000 p 6.).

The images of the Greek Street sleeper were all printed in acetate and ended being the actual object of a physical activity of stalking, as referred above by Christov-Bakargiev, in relation to William Kentridge's drawing methods. The weather at the time was very unstable, changing from cold rain to bright sun and back again. The images began to dissolve, not as a 'catastrophe', but rather as a digital watercolour. As the work had become an open-studio activity, I was willing to incorporate this semi-foreseen accident. But still, I wanted to keep the contour of the figures, so I decided to perforate the acetate alongside the image's contour lines, before they vanished. I used a needle. As it was a task demanding precision, I used no gloves. Yet, it was cold and raining, and it was all very painful – physically, emotionally, and very publicly so.

When I was halfway through my needlework, I understood I did not need the second large image, which had been put in place of the central panel, on both doors.

I took off these larger images and the entire space in the rooftop came flowing in, through the central void in the doors. Through those empty squares could be seen the remains of the house on the wall, the interior





of skylights and the texture of pavement. The two mutually exclusive zones of attention, which before had been separating images and space, had just evaporated in the air. The two disheartened doors had opened a breathing space in the installation and now a visual fluidity braided<sup>40</sup> together all the elements on the rooftop.

The witnessing of this powerful effect on the work, coming from the empty squares, liberated me from the necessity to grant immediate visibility for the smaller images, still on the doors. I realised that under the academic pressures I was starting to treat the elements in my work as information that needed to be communicated, instead of respecting them as materials with an inner voice. So, I moved one of the doors away from its location, facing the stairs, and placed it more in conversation with the other elements in the work. Now, the passer-by, if interested in the work, would get off the stairs, wander through the space, and then, in close proximity, would be able to discover the sleeper's gestural. This gestural, that is the core of the reminder, was still there in the image, but now weathered down to the condition of a trace, a remainder, just like the 'ghost' house in the space.

The sleeper's gestural, implying a strength of resistance while in a state of fall, so far informed three works: the Unattended project, The Reminder as an installation on the rooftop and finally, the participatory digital movie, also called The Reminder, which is part of the Chance Encounters Portfolio.

If the Chance Encounters Portfolio, as a proposal of transportable interactive installation, found its ideal condition of participation, by

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<sup>40</sup> [...] the noniconic figure of a void to be inscribed as a third, unexpected term [...] – space.[...] the feeling of waiting is incredible, as though the moment of representation were frozen around a central void [...] in the circularity of braiding [...] letting us see the stigmata of a blindly conducted, labyrinthine search. (Rouan, 1991 pp. 80-82)

now the reader of this thesis should be halfway through the viewing of the digital movies. Again, I want to make clear that the portfolio is being presented here as the work in itself, not as a kind of documentation. Therefore, the following writing is not a critical evaluation, but just the gathering of a few introductory notes and some propositions about different configurations for the work. Nevertheless, I expect the portfolio to work as a conversational, this meaning, the Viva examination could become another instance of the participatory dimension of the work.

### Chance encounters portfolio

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The DVD digital movies belonging to the Chance Encounters Portfolio<sup>41</sup> are active space insertions. I am naming 'active space', any place that has a specific daily use, independent of their appropriation as an exhibition space. As a consequence of being a utilitarian space, a location will have a model-of-use<sup>42</sup>, which codifies the accepted behaviour in the premises. That means, individual performances are evaluated in relation to levels of competence in mastering or not this designated model-of-use.

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<sup>41</sup> The Chance Encounters Portfolio was part of the group show Chance Encounters (2002) Gallery 32. London, which was put together by Gabriela Salgado, curator of the University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art (UECLAA).

<sup>42</sup> Suzanne Langer states that the fundamental abstraction for architecture is 'the ethncal domain' (Langer, 1953 p.100). Taken as a realm, or virtual place, it is a sphere of influence with a cultural function and may affect a geographic locality or not. As a non-geographic place, 'the ethncal domain' is in fact an organizational principle made visible. Based on this statement, Nathan Silver (1975) proposes that in architecture we should not talk about forms but instead about formal agents, which generate complex actions that are related to our belonging to an ethncal domain. For Silver, the aesthetic in architecture is the structuring of possibilities for human action, therefore the situations in life are the true subject matter addressed by architecture, and we should not refer to works of architecture but to models-of-use.

To present an artwork as an active space insertion, instead of surrounding the artwork with a neutral space that asserts its relevance and authority, is to propose its presence as a parallel competence, that is, a realm with a peculiar model-of-use that, from inside its difference, generates friction to assert meaning as negotiation within the circumstances of its reception. The circumstances of the artwork's reception, is not only the relationship with the viewer, but even the reception available for the work from inside any specific circuit of attention, belonging to the [art] world in general. This instance of reception works in fact as an instance of production – it creates the conditions of display that will allow the viewer to access the work.

The Chance Encounters Portfolio is an attempt to address the changeable conditions of reception that a work may encounter. Its configuration puts together the installation activity's defining tactics of dispersal and a peculiar condition found in the materiality of the DVD format, namely, its relationship with the viewer. Covering a large spectrum, this relationship goes from the hands on manipulation of domestic viewing to the institutional format peculiar to large wall-to-wall installations.

The Chance Encounters Portfolio is then being presented as the work in itself and not as the documentation of the work. As such, it is the collected version of a work that can disperse in several wall-to-wall installations or site-specific interventions. The portfolio, as the work's collected version, is intended to be a performative installation that is entirely dependent on a willing viewer, who will decide where, for how long, and which of the DVD disks will be playing. Moreover, as a portfolio, the work incorporates not only the

viewer's gestures and surroundings, but through the brief description of its various dispersed versions as DVD installations, the portfolio acknowledges the viewer's imagination as the ground-zero of the cinematic as *elsewhere*<sup>43</sup>.

Jorg Heiser (2004) writing on Francis Alys, ponders that unlike Benjamin's flâneur, who captures the city as a phantasmagoria veiled by the crowd, Alys merges in the crowd, offering himself as an active phantasmagoria, performing neither the Surrealist 'aimless drift', nor the Situationist environmental analysis, but indeed perpetrating a kind of fabulation on differentiated uses of the urban space.

The making of the works comprising the Chance Encounter Portfolio reasserted a similar use of the urban drift as retrieval tool, but according certain peculiar lines as: a] it is not a 'aimless' but a 'parallel' activity – small inserts of drifting will happen continuously alongside daily tasks (this non-intentionality prevents faking the event); b] it is not analytical from inception, as it is not mapping the city's 'psychogeographical relief, with constant currents, fixed points and vortex which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones' (Debord, 1958 p. 50). Quite contrary it trusts 'the element of chance' to *detrterritorialize* (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980) such 'psychogeographical relief'; c] it will respond to a witnessed event, only if a recall happens in the afterwardness (that means, the work

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<sup>43</sup> [...] One thing all films have in common is the power to take perception elsewhere. [...] Any film wraps us in uncertainty. The longer we look through a camera or watch a projected image the remote the world becomes, yet we begin to understand that remoteness more. Limits trap the illimitable, until the spring we discovered turns into a flood. (Smithson, 1971 pp. 138, 141).

Smithson's definition of the cinematic as 'elsewhere' comes as a third-term, surfacing from reception in the form of an all-encompassing spacialisation, and making a counter-point to the conflicting temporalities, described by Laura Mulvey (Mulvey, 2000), as existing between the 'there-and-them-ness' of the moment of registration – 'the moment when the image was inscribed by light onto photosensitive material' and the 'here-and-now-ness' of the movement of the narrative and the temporality of its fiction, present in cinema's storytelling.



happens on the work's demand); d] it is not exercised as an insertion in the urban happening in opposition to the studio work (the studio as a site of making and *ripening time* just morphed into an editing suite); e] more than being a performatic action, it posits an activity of sampling (hence the inclusion in the portfolio of works that, concerning chance encounters, equals urban space and cinematic space, and thus translate urban sampling into cinematic sampling, as it is the case with The Welcome Enigma I, II and Abridged Version , and A Voice.).

The Chance Encounters Portfolio comprises seventeen digital movies, presented in twenty DVD disks. They were all done between 2001 and 2003, as fieldwork for this research, with the exception of a video work done in 1995 – Getting in Touch, which was annexed as a reference.

Pocket Image [2001, 12min loop,] is an active space insertion to be placed inside a café. There the work will happen in the interplay of three elements: a] A group of several small menu stands, each to be located on top of every table inside the café. The stands are displaying a Brazilian banknote. The illustration on the banknote is the image of a hummingbird feeding its young ones. This image is positioned just above the designation of the currency, namely the word 'Real', a word which has the same meaning in Portuguese and in English; b] A monitor, to be located on the counter. The monitor will be showing Pocket Image, a film work that was made from sampling a fragment of the image on the banknote. The image was then animated, using a certain number of verse-and-reverse sequences of dissolve effects. The dissolve



effect was used as an attempt to refer to the very diffuse way our perception deals with the symbolic charge of images and names visible in our daily life; c] The café's clientele. Drinking coffee, talking to friends, reading a book, paying the bill, noticing the work...The piece enlists the café's clients as the daily-life performers acting out some questions: could the distracted exposure to an image bring very diffuse perceptions to surface as meaning? How far can we stretch the envelope of intentionality in an artwork and still expect it to function as a carrier of meaning? Can an artwork survive as a catalyst without being surrounded by a specific circuit of attention? Would this autonomy from a circuit be a factor optimising the artwork's function as an 'irruption of alterity' that shifts the registers and assumptions of the everyday?

Cross [2001, 9 sec] and Cabine [2001, 4.8 min] are companion works and are my first direct take on the digital sampling of urban image, understood as fragmentary imagery able to accommodate a sense of public space – a space of chance events, which imprints in perception as experienced time, or time marked by a inner rhythm that is cultural, and as such is the time of the human gestures and interactions that, in their disparity, is an estranged but collective heritage weaving the cities as a frictional, multi-folded, but still breathing, tissue.

Cross [2001, 9 sec] is to be shown as a double-sided projection in a large facade window. This configuration will permit the work to be seen from street level, as well as from inside the building. Placing the work in an interface between interior and exterior space mirrors the interplay between controlled decisions and chance events condensed in this tiny fragment of urban narrative, which hovers



around the decision a pedestrian makes to cross the street in a diagonal line, and the chance confluence of this line with a passing boat and two other approaching passers-by.

Cabine [2001, 4.8 min] is to be shown indoors in a three monitor set-up, placed near the same window where Cross is being projected. The three monitors will all screen Cabine, but each will have a different delay, allowing for the simultaneous viewing of the before-and-after of a who-done-it narrative – the forgetting of an address book in a telephone booth that is occupied by a succession of customers, each interacting in a different way with the note book. As such, they are all performing as carriers of a peculiar cultural time and its set of gestures.

Cross and Cabine were both generated in 1997, using the same procedure. Extracts were taken from two four-hour S-VHS tapes. A camera running unattended, recorded the two tapes on two following days. On each day, the camera was placed by one of the two front windows at the room I was living in, for three months, as a resident artist at Cité des Arts, in Paris. The S-VHS tapes were used as capture devices for chance-imagery. In 2001 some S-VHS extracts were copied in a High-8 format, which was then copied into a DVCAM tape and transferred to the computer for editing. This editing was basically a work of frame cutting. The passage from one format to another – S-VHS to High8, and then to DVCAM – gave the final image a durational texture, where movement informs the colour and the outline of the figures. As an option of making, it was indeed a process of adding new qualities through the loss of standard qualities. Treating the recorded material, in this gain-through-



loss way, also made me aware of editing as a tactics of gleaning through the materiality of two experienced times: the personal time I spent, crafting the images in the editing room, and the gestural time belonging to the characters inside this fragment of urban space narrative.

Tape [2002, 1.4 min loop] is a single monitor work to be shown in spaces of transit, like, for instance, entrance halls. Tape is very busy, noisy and short. It plays with the iconic tropes of the urban image: buses, cinema facades, street traffic, industrial noises... For 52 seconds the sound and the image of a tiny street sequence is repeated and reversed, followed by silence and a black screen for the same amount of time – 52 seconds. Emptied of images, the black screen morphs into a mirror, reflecting the viewer framed by the surroundings. Then the mediated urban acceleration resumes. In the background of the scene, through the windows of the bus, on the cinema facade, two film's titles are partly visible: *Tape sa Vie* [your life]. Then again, the screen morphs into a mirror... then again the acceleration resumes...



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Passing By [2002, 7 min] is a wall-to-wall backlit projection for a large corridor. In this configuration, when passing by the work, the viewer's body, not its shadow, emulates the imagery being presented – the shadows of passers-by, cast over a stonewall at sun-set time. Walking is here being incorporated into the work as a retrieval tool collecting and doubling meaning from the work. Passing By has a panning intermittent soundtrack, just a few tone fragments of a whistle, which was manipulated through repetition and inversion, and separated in two channels. When exhibiting Passing By in a large corridor, the two



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loudspeakers should be placed one at each end of the space. This separation will permit the sound to travel from one side to another, enveloping the moment when movement that was happening in the image is halted – as an effect of editing, the image is frozen for a few seconds, each time a passing shadow overlaps another one, coming from the opposite direction. An odd shape is created by the overlapping shadows and the loss of contour, the suspension of movement, the hearing of passing sounds, informs this flow of chance encounters of their potential for disorganizing and reorganizing life, in the present act or in its afterwardness.

A Voice [2002, 2.18 min loop] is meant to be a wall-to-wall front projection, also for a large corridor. It was made from a manipulated unauthorised sampling. As Cross and Cabine, A Voice is an extract that migrated through different technologies. The sampling was taken from a VHS broadcast recording of 1492 The Conquest of Paradise (1992), directed by Ridley Scott. The recording was made with a digital camera connected to a VHS player, causing the colour to be lost and the texture to become grainier. The older technology, passing through a new one, produced an image that looks even more ancient. This front-to-back movement in the technological time informed the editing of the images – a fragment positing the encounter between Europeans and Amerindians (two groups living in different technological times). This fragment is a parabola on technologies of the encounter – an encounter of difference is treated as a source of bewilderment *and* shared laughter. The sampled scene is presented through large cut-out letters, running



against a black background, forming the sentence 'a voice inside my head asking ...'. This voice seems to find resonance in some of Alain Badiou statements:

[...] There is never 'the Other' as such. There are projects of thought, or of action, on the basis of which we distinguish between those who are friends, those who are enemies, and those who can be considered neutral. The question of knowing how to treat enemies or neutrals depends entirely on the project concerned, the thought that constitutes it, and the concrete circumstances (is the project in an escalating phase? Is it very dangerous? etc.).

[...] Evil does not exist either as nature or as law. It exists, and varies, in the singular becoming of the True.

[...] A Truth is a concrete process that starts by an upheaval (an encounter, a general revolt, a surprising new invention), and develops as fidelity to the novelty thus experimented [...] (Cox, Whalen, 2002)

Studio Life First Act [2002,3,15min loop] is an enactment of the 'bring a plant' grounding device described before. It has no specific configuration in relation to size or context, but it is a *wall* projection – it needs the materiality of the wall as texture re-surfacing through the dissolve effects that are punctuating the dislocation of the plant pot across the virtual room in the projected scene and the actual wall receiving this projection. This recurring movement emulates the persistence of a marker that still needs to generate the space it is supposed to mark, voicing a 'differential truth'.

Studio Life Double Act [2002, 2.25 min.] was not created as an active space insertion work. Actually, it travels safe in any format: looping monitor, large projection, or digital gift... Studio



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Life Double Act is the recording of a farewell performance for room 501, the last studio I was sharing at CSM, in Charing Cross Road, before I forced myself out in order to concentrate on the PhD writing. This performative work started with two wine glasses gathering dust on a shelf in the studio for five months. It is, perhaps, a kind of silent statement on ripening time, and a low-key complaint against the pressures of academic productivity. When the time to leave the studio arrived, I invited the artist and researcher Verina Gfader<sup>44</sup>, my friendly studio mate and PhD colleague, to collaborate as a performer in this 'goodbye' work. Maybe that is why Studio Life Double Act is not an active space insertion work – the search for harmonious collaboration was already fulfilled during its making;

Studio Life Final Act [2003, 8min loop] Studio Life Final Act is to be seen in a monitor, looping its imagery, like a fish in an aquarium. It is the recording of the dismantling of the third studio I used at CSM, in Charing Cross, Summer 2000. The room is seen reflected in the metal balloon that belonged to the Unattended project. The image was scaled down and the footage was divided in two. The two resulting sequences, showing the consecutive segments of the action, are then placed side-by-side in the screen, composing a simultaneous viewing. This folding in time, of a double line of actions happening inside a same space, captures the core paradox of this work: the unmaking of the studio is the making of the work.



<sup>44</sup> Verina Gfader is a London-based artist, curator and writer. As a curator, she included Passing By, Tape, The Welcome Enigma I and The Welcome Enigma II in the group show Effects of the Street Affects (2000) Fotoforum Gallery, Innsbruck, AU.





The Welcome Enigma I [2002, 12 min], The Welcome Enigma II [2002, 4.46 min] and The Welcome Enigma: abridged version [2003, 2.22 min], are all active space insertion works to be presented in a video-library using the library's video players. It was made with unauthorised samplings, and as such, it is for educational use only. The Welcome Enigma, as an installation, is a kind of performance induction work. The viewer is the performer, selecting which part of the work will be seen, choosing if the stop and play commands will be used or not, and deciding how much of personal time should be given to each work. The Welcome Enigma triptych comes from an interest in cinema for its capacity to inhabit personal memory<sup>45</sup>, while, at the same time, becoming a shared construct, in the same way a world-city, the one that is able to project a strong international image, is a shared construct, holding lines of desire for new destinations and possibilities of transformation. Weaved from a matter impregnated by misreads and projections, these lines of desire are triggers for conversations, and a token for cultural exchanges that may result in the re-addressing of the shared construct, or a re-evaluation of its effects. Although in a reverse manner, the scene in The Welcome Enigma I that was sampled from Jean Rauch's *Chronicle of a Summer* [Rauch, 1961] is paradigmatic of this situation – around a table, an explanation about concentration camps meets the comment: 'yes, I saw it in a film'.

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[...]

In 1977 sociologists at the University of Provence began a ten-year oral history research project in which they conducted more than four hundred recorded interviews with residents of the Marseille/Aix-en-Provence area (Taranger, 1991). They asked each interviewee to describe her or his personal memories of the years 1930 to 1945. They found an almost universal tendency for personal history to be mixed with recollections of scenes from films and other media productions. 'I saw at the cinema' would become simply 'I saw'[...] (Burgin, 2000 p.29)



The two criteria used to select the unauthorised samplings were: a] they should have this capacity of inhabiting memory, not as a fact belonging to a sequential narrative, but as:

[...] a *signaletic material* which includes all kinds of modulation features, sensory (visual and sound), kinetic, intensive, affective, rhythmic, tonal, and even verbal (oral and written). Eisenstein compared them first to ideograms, then, more profoundly, to the internal monologue as proto-language or primitive language system. But, even with its verbal elements, this is neither a language system nor a language. It is a plastic mass, an a-signifying and a-syntactic material, a material not formed linguistically even though it is not amorphous and is formed semiotically, aesthetically and pragmatically. It is a condition anterior by right to what it conditions. It is not an enunciation, and these are not utterances. It is an *utterable*. (Deleuze, 1985 p.29)

b] they should be collected from tapes belonging to the video-libraries in the two colleges I joined in London, namely Goldsmith and CSM. I was there taking the cinematic experience and the institutional library as two devices operating in the same way towards reality – they create a landscape of meaning that acts as a second-skin over the environment of the produced knowledge at any contemporary time. Thus, they may as well be gleaned as a similar field of retrieval, through the use of tactics of sampling and quoting.

The two rules generated their own exceptions. For the first rule, 'the kind of tenderness' (Burgin, 2000 p.22) that captures and locates film scenes in memory, is as much erratic as the one locating the *punctum* in afterwardness. As Barthes explains:

Nothing surprising, then, if sometimes, despite its clarity, the *punctum* should be revealed only after the fact, when the photograph is no longer in front of me and I think back on it. I may know better a photograph I remember than a photograph I am looking at, as if direct vision oriented its language wrongly, engaging it in an effort of description which will always miss its point of effect, the *punctum*. Reading Van der Zee's photograph, I thought I had discerned what moved me: the strapped pumps of the black woman in her Sunday best; but this photograph has *worked* within me, and later on I realized that the real *punctum* was the necklace she was wearing; [...] I had realized that however immediate and incisive it was, the *punctum* could accommodate a certain latency (but never any scrutiny). (Barthes. 1980 p.53)

This 'certain latency' that captures memory beyond scrutiny, also surrounds the 'utterable' in film. Most of the unauthorised samplings are from the scenes I actually remembered<sup>46</sup>, but some are new scenes from the same film, that I had forgotten how meaningful they were to me<sup>47</sup>, some are new additions altogether<sup>48</sup>, and at least one is a completely different scene from the one which was the reason I went back to that specific film<sup>49</sup>. Two exceptions occurred for the second rule dictating that the tapes for the samplings should be borrowed from college libraries. The first was for Vidas Secas (Barren Lives, 1963), by Nelson Pereira dos Santos (2002), a 'Cinema Novo' classic, based on the homonymous book by Graciliano Ramos (1892-1953), whose subject matter deals with the internal migratory

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<sup>46</sup> For The Welcome Enigma I and The Welcome Enigma: Abridged Version: Vivre sa Vie (1962), Pierrot le Fou (1965), The Sacrifice (1986), Weekend (1967), Blue (1993). For The Welcome Enigma II: π: Faith in Chaos (1999), Chronique d'une été (1961), The American Friend (1976), Vidas Secas (1963).

<sup>47</sup> The Sacrifice (1986).

<sup>48</sup> Cyclo (1995), Ana Mendieta, Body Tracks (1974).

<sup>49</sup> Ulysses' Gaze (1995).

movements forced by the drought in the northern regions of Brazil. And finally, the second exception was for The American Friend, by Win Wenders, which I filmed direct from a one-off screening in the NFT, in London.

Surprisingly, as I kept the scenes as fragments, or tokens, with not much interference on their internal structure, editing the work was opening up a space 'riddled with nodes of contact and contamination'<sup>50</sup>. A space of listening, where voicing was happening as an act of 'dislocation'<sup>51</sup> from the original markers, in response to the 'para-discursive intensities that lie beside and beyond the discursive terrain [...jamming together [...] images, voices, scripts, lingoes' (Maharaj, 2000 p.39, 45).

Pass [2003, 3 sec loop] is a single monitor piece for spaces of transit, like entrance halls. In Pass, as with Tape, sound and repetition are working in time carving a passage where volume, and its suppression, migrates from the aural, as sensation, to the spatial, as presence. The area in between the image and the viewer is thus impregnated with a sense of sculptural tangibility, constantly expanding and retracting. The sound follows the movement in the image – a 3-second zooming out on a fragment of a street scene snapshot presenting Vermeer's The Milk Maid as a large propaganda poster, on the side of a London red bus. This localised information is absent from the work. The camera framed only the milk bow and the hands, and stops sort on the threshold of identification of the painting. On the screen just for a fraction of



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<sup>50</sup> [...] it is shot through with borrowed, nicked elements, riddled with nodes of contact and contamination – with translations [...] keeping it that way ' in the infinitive'. (Maharaj, 2000 p.37)

<sup>51</sup> [...] we might use Joyce's word dislocation – a double disruption not only of mode of speech but also of position and place from which it is spoken [...]. (Maharaj, 2000 p. 37)



second in each loop, the dark inner void of the bow becomes a haunted incognita in between fulfilment and denial .

Say [2003, 1.26 min] is a single monitor work, but it is to be shown in a waiting room, placed in such a way that it could either be seen, or it could also be avoided, depending on the viewer's choice of seat. It presents two urban image snapshots and a printed sentence, which were filmed while the photos were inside plastic sleeves. The camera panning over the images and the words captures three layers of surface: a] The images as content (two street scenes, some few words about sounds, voice and accents) ; b] The plastic sleeves as texture and reflexive matter (sometimes the silhouette of the filmmaker becomes visible); the erratic lines of movement of the camera drifting over the scene. On presentation, when looping, the work warps these surfaces around the viewer's work of attention.

The Reminder is a participatory screening work. It is a three-part work to be held in a cinema with the audience deciding how long each screening will last. The Reminder part I [2003, variable] places a proposition that is a model of interaction for the audience – to stop the screening going on and on, the audience needs to voice its will. When this first screening stops, The Reminder Part II [2003, variable] starts looping immediately. As with Part I, Part II will stop only by the request of the audience. This happening, The Reminder Part III [2003, 21 sec] will then be screened just once, thanking the audience for its participation. The work is a playful inquiry on the ambiguous condition of cinemagoers as a *passive/active* agent of reception for images coming from an *elsewhere*.



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By the River [2003, 8 min] is a large flat-screen work for non-places<sup>52</sup>, like train stations, airports, and shopping malls. It was made recording the same situation present in Passing By: people queuing on the Albert Embankment in London, 'for three miles, for seven hours or more, to honour the passing of the Queen Mother' (Ferguson, 2002, p.17). For Passing By I recorded the shadows on the wall alongside the Embankment. To record By the River I just turned the camera and captured the silhouettes against the sunset on the river. Many effects were added to the work in the editing room: alterations in colour and scale, image delays and some rotations. At a certain stage in this process, the work seemed finished, and yet I was not happy. I liked the sense of presence and absence around the silhouettes, given by some of the effects applied, but I felt uneasy about an atmosphere of longing surrounding the Parliament tower, visible as a fixed point at the back of the scene, as if it were a fairy-tale castle in a theatre backdrop. One year later, being more effect-wise in the editing room, I returned to the work and applied a digital zoom that shifts the tower in and out of the frame, in a very slow movement, as if it were a thought sliding in and out of someone's mind. This slow irregular timing of the digital zoom, like the presence of a human breath, changes the perception of the lines of movement inside the depicted space on the screen. The iconic institutional marker – the tower, is still present in the scene, but it is not a fixed point any more. Now it



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If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. The hypothesis advanced here is that supermodernity produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which, unlike Baudelairean modernity, do not integrate the earlier places [...] we start wondering to what sort of gaze it may be amenable. [...] Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten. But non-places are the real measure of our time [...] (Augé, 1992 pp.77-79)

breathes presence and absence, in a gentle rhythm, that gives prominence to the human flow on the scene.

Footnote [2003, 3 min] is a self-explanatory sampling of the original footage of Passing By, done as a companion to Occasional Sights: a London guidebook of missed opportunities and things that aren't always there, by Anna Best (2003) and it is to be shown on a monitor, near to one exemplar of the guidebook<sup>53</sup>, as a kind of celebration of this singular chance-encounter. Best was passing by the Albert Embankment on her bicycle, when she saw me filming the shadows on the wall. Footnote is the recording of her voice-over inviting me to send material for the guidebook. The sound of surprise in her voice, and the giggles on disbelief when I told Best I knew her work match my feelings towards her invitation. Footnote speaks of the urban as a privileged context for productive chance encounters, therefore it sits comfortably as the last work done for the Chance Encounter Portfolio.



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Getting in Touch, [1995, 6.17 min] is described in detail on page 100. Though it is a work made four years before starting this research it is included here, as an annex to the portfolio, for its relevance to issues being addressed now. When I arrived in London in 1994, the first friends I made were English, Japanese and Finnish colleagues on the MA. In the early stages of our friendship, I lived a bizarre bodily experience: whenever I would meet these friends by chance, my first reaction was to hug-and-kiss (very Brazilian), but I would hold myself back, knowing each of them had a culturally different body code. It was awkward. If I wanted to be caring with my friends, I needed to repress



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<sup>53</sup> Stills of Passing By are on the pages 171/172 of guidebook.

the signs of care that my body knows. That is, I needed to re-code my body, if I wanted to go on *getting in touch*, in a gentle way.

Akram Khan, the dancer who is currently being celebrated in London as a talent in both the Indian classical and the contemporary dance scenes, recounts a similar experience. The son of Bangladeshi parents, from the age of seven he trained in Kathak, an ancient northern Indian form of dance. It was only when he was already twenty that he started training in contemporary dance, doing a degree in the subject. Remembering this time, he says he endured a period of uncertainty, as his 'body got confused until it started to make decisions for itself'<sup>54</sup>. He takes the experience as a template. 'Through a state of confusion clarity starts to appear. That is my work' (Siegle, 2003 p.13).

Akram Khan's explanation of the process of creative inscription in his body of an expanded repertoire of gestures and modes of being, is a brief but exact narration of a process of self-othering, or a moment of dilation, lived as gradual release and not as regressive panic. I am happy I can borrow his words to close this introduction to the Chance Encounters Portfolio.

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<sup>54</sup> See note 9, page 31



## CLOSING THE WRITING AND OPENING A CONVERSATION

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In which way does the definition of a new terminology to address installation art expand the understanding of this practice, in general?

An outcome of stating dispersal as the tactic for defining installation art is the immediate framing of a realm of singularity for this polymorphic mode of address in art making. This stated singularity – the notion of dispersal – can then be used as a guideline when returning to the broad panorama of hybrid affiliations, which is implied, as a challenge, whenever a historical overview of installation art is attempted.

From the point of view of dispersal, we could read as a foundational event for establishing a perceptual field related to installation the work done by El Lissitzky in 1923 for the Great Berlin Art Exhibition – Proun Room<sup>55</sup>. In this work El Lissitzky extended the painterly parameters of the Proun series<sup>56</sup> into real space by dispersing the notational elements of his paintings as autonomous marks all over the walls of the room. This 'ghost architecture' would then induce the viewer to walk around the space. The Proun Room was thus incorporating the viewer's walking-as-performance as one of the elements making up the work. As addressed gestural, the body moving through the space becomes a site of contaminations, postponements, imprints, recollections and re-enactments, which builds in fact, as a slow-burning moment of

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<sup>55</sup> Proun is the acronym, in Russian, for Project for the Affirmation of the New. It was reconstructed by the Van Abbemuseum for Century City (2001) Tate Modern, London.

<sup>56</sup> On the back of the gouache Round Point (1926) El Lissitzky handwrote, in German: 'Proun is the transition from painting to architecture' (Chan- Magomedov, 1990 p.39).



dilation, or a subtle process of self-othering, being operated by the work. Lebbeus Wood describes this process with precision:

A simpler example: a person is walking across the room. At any instance, is [s]he "only" at a particular place in the room, one defined, say, by Cartesian coordinates? If so, how does he get to the next place – in other words, how does he cross the threshold of the limits of the increment? [...] "Becoming" – whether in the form of simple motion or historical transformation – cannot be divided into discrete increments of identity, but flows as a continuum, so that at any one "point" [...] a thing is simultaneously what it "is" and what it is "becoming". Identities are transformational, sliding and shifting in an ongoing complex stream of becoming [...] (Lebbeus, 1995 p.48)

The room in this example could well be any room at the house of Tia Ciata – there a gathering was being orchestrated by a smooth strategy of dispersal, with the different activities at each space inducing a flow of interactions and diverse experiences amongst the guests. Guests, we must not forget, who were the subjects of a conflicted proximity, shared in a not so remote past as masters and slaves, and in the present as an on-going mutual learning process of self-othering or re-personalisation.

Under the light of the topics discussed by this research, the functioning of Tia Ciata's house could be held as 'the other' foundational event for the understanding of installation art, taken as a mode of address that brings into experience the possibility of a space to be inhabited as a process of self-othering. That means, inside an installation space, while emulating the drifts of a flâneur around a city, or the wanderings of a guest around the house, the identity of the

viewer's moving body translates as belonging to 'an ongoing complex stream of becoming'.

Hélio Oiticica seems to have understood the strength of Tia Ciata's gathering as a 'ghost architecture' applied to a site. In the conceptual ambient Éden (Whitechapel Gallery, 1969, London), a dispersion of several stations or 'nests' were proposed as 'supra-sensorial penetrable', each having inside a specific raw material – leaves, sand, water, or even interventions in the ambient light, which were folding the reception *and* the work in a single space-time nourished by acts of 'non-repressive leisure'.

While developing the work, in one of the many letters sent to his friend the art critic and curator Guy Brett<sup>57</sup>, Oiticica captioned one of Éden's secluded spaces as "Devotion to Tia Ciata". Without referring to this particular fact, Brett is aware of its effects when he writes:

The environments Hélio exhibited in galleries were variations of an experimental living and working space he constructed in his own homes which, reduced to its simplest terms, was a combination of habitable individual 'nests' and communal 'life' spaces. Partly he had in mind a secular version of the Barracão, the sacred dance building associated with the Brazilian Candomblé. The whole drift of his earlier work had been to prepare the public for a bodily engagement with elements (colour, space, transparency) previously conceived for mental, untouchable relationship. The physical engagement took a range of forms commonplace in everyday life but unheard of in a

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<sup>57</sup> This letter was exhibited alongside Hélio Oiticica – Quasi-Cinema (2002) Hélio Oiticica, Neville d'Almeida. London: Whitechapel Gallery.

museum: touching, lying down, putting on and taking off clothing, dancing, walking barefoot, etc. (Brett, 1994)

All this 'pure activity' would bring to the assemblage of 'nests' and events comprising Éden 'precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections' (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980 p.8).

Speaking on the nature of Assemblages in general Deleuze and Guattari recognize that meaning takes place alongside two axis of action:

[...] On a first, horizontal, axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a collective assemblage of enunciations, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on the vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilized it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away. (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980 p.88)

Reading Tia Ciata's gathering according to the logic of these two axes, clarifies how this event could be taken as foundational for the understanding of installation art. Comprising both aspects of the horizontal axis – content and expression, the gathering was a 'pure activity' sharing the collective assemblage of a cultural enunciation – the Afro-Brazilian everyday. On the vertical axis, the house was a site where a conflicted proximity (a troubled territory) was orchestrated as a 'continuum in gradation' (an act of



reterritorialization) by creating in the space zones of activities with different cultural densities, which would act as layers of accessibility facilitating insertion through peculiar forms of interaction (an act of deterritorialization).

The gatherings at Tia Ciata's would then be a field of retrieval, from where content would migrate in a flow, carried away by each guest's gestural – manners of being or modalities constantly producing intensities, vibrations, breaths, micro-events of intonations, that is, utterables prior to enunciation. The 'pure activity' of the guest's gestural, either at Tia Ciata's house or Oiticica's Éden, would lay a 'smooth, vectorial, projective or topological space'<sup>58</sup> (a 'ghost' architecture) over the striated metric space of the room (a 'host' architecture).

Quoting Pierre Boulez (Bennett, Bradshaw, 1971 p. 85), Deleuze and Guattari explained the difference between the two kinds of space-time in music: in striated space, the measure can be irregular or regular, but it is always assignable; in smooth space, the partition, or break, "can be effected at will" (Deleuze, Guattari, 1980 p.553).

This partition attempted 'at will' is the interruption of the series arresting behaviour (the assigned measure), and as subtle caesura or moment of self-othering (the geneses of new lines of flight) is the same being addressed by the dispersion of a 'ghost architecture' over a 'host' site. As a description of aims and means

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<sup>58</sup> The model is a vertical one; it operates in an open space throughout which things-flows are distributed, rather than plotting out a closed space for linear and solid things. It is the difference between a smooth (vectorial, projective, or topological) space and a striated (metric) space: in the first case "space is occupied without being counted" and in the second case "space is counted in order to be occupied". [Deleuze, Guattari 1980, pp. 361, 362].



this applies to Tia Ciata's gatherings, Hélio Oiticica's Éden and installation in general, as a mode of address.

The notions of dilation and self-othering that informs dispersal as a pattern for installation art are also useful when accessing works like Fontes<sup>59</sup>, by Cildo Meireles or Fantasma<sup>60</sup>, by Antonio Manuel. In Fontes, hundreds of carpenter's rulers were hanging from the ceiling, forming a dense spiral like a yellow forest inside the room. In this accumulation, each ruler was marked with divisions based on arbitrary units of measurements, existing outside any known system. The walls were covered by dozens of round clocks, whose digits were placed randomly, marking the passing of time in a non-linear way. Over the floor, thousands of black digits, as if they had fallen from the rulers or the clocks, were creating a cartography of contamination, invading the near-by spaces, carried by the viewers' shoes. Here, dispersal was infiltrating as content the very vanishing point beyond language, and yet, it was sustaining a line of dialogue with the multiplicity of the world, held by a simple action – the viewer's walking about and in-and-out of the installation. This simple action was blurring the threshold work-world, and this soft border was a two-way passage between arbitrary systems (rulers and clocks) and random recreation (black digits cartography).

In Fantasma, a similar proposal of contamination of differences was made by articulating, inside the same work, on one hand, an elegant visual field made of suspended pieces of coal, and

<sup>59</sup> Fontes (Fountains, sources) (1992) Cildo Meirales, Documenta IX, Kassel, Germany.

<sup>60</sup> Fantasma (Phantom) (1994) Antonio Manuel, Galeria do IBEU, Rio de Janeiro, BR.



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on the other, a social-political statement made through the appropriation of a newspaper image showing a threatened crime witness, who was hiding the face behind a piece of cloth. In the exhibition space these two realms of differing awareness neither excluded nor integrated each other's discourses. Quite the contrary, they asserted themselves as parallel competences addressing the world, on their own terms. Two worlds, two perceptual textures and the viewer's mind had to negotiate their co-habitation of the same space. The work dictated a certain pace for the completion of the task. The image was positioned at a corner of the space, behind the field of suspended pieces of coal. The viewer-addressee of this installation, to access the photo, would have to cross the field, gently twisting the body in-between the pieces of coal. At any given point in the room, the field would visually organize itself according to a new line of flight. This effect was delicate and exhilarating at the same time. The encounter with the image at the margins of the field would not erase the field's soothing power but would highlight that this field was made out of burned matter, and it could leave marks on you, that would stay with you when leaving the field, as a subtle dilation working within you, in the afterwardness.

Another of the findings of this research – the notion of a system of relevance, is operational not only concerning one's personal practice but also when inquiring into contemporary art making as a single field of collective investigation on specific issues, as for instance, on relations of received conflict.

Carolyn Ellis while writing an auto-ethnographic account on terminal illness (Ellis, 1995) starts by examining this question: What does it mean to tell the truth? She refers to a strategy described as 'uncertain open awareness context' (Timmermans, 1994, p.333), where hope is sustained while information is given by using ambivalence as a coping strategy. This needs to be so, as awareness context is complicated by messy emotions that affect how people take in information, what it means to them, and how they process it on different occasions (Ellis, 2000 pp.290, 291, 303).

We indicated before that the emotion-value is a determinant factor in the constitution of a system of relevance generated by a creative process. Acting as a propensity towards meaning, the emotion-value responds to the utterables that radiate either from matter or concepts and have been actualized inside a self-reference/hetero-reference dynamics. Being the carriers of the emotion-value peculiar to each maker immersed in a creative process, the utterables, on the other hand, also imprint in reception. There, the utterables continue to act as carrier of the emotion-value, but this time, the emotion-value of the viewer-addressee. This confluence of emotion-values allows sometimes for the recognition by reception of a statement-in-progress, congregating different projects around an issue, even when it is not yet acknowledged as relevant by the maker, despite being constantly readdressed.

Concerning the contemporary inquiry on received conflict, in the work of Anne Tallentire, for example, a peculiar engagement with a notion of conflict traverses several works,



as if an engrained fault line. Conflict, in her work, is addressed by being disempowered through what could be named as a tactic of furtherance, that consists of harbouring time as ripening time – the time situations need to unfold at their own pace, beyond the reasons of any finality.

Instances<sup>61</sup> is a video installation presenting the coming of dawn over an urban landscape (where is this *elsewhere*?). The spatial situation of the work is a small viewing room, just one large seat in front of the projection, as if it were a window. In this bare space, the ripening time of the strategy of furtherance is inscribed, as an utterable, by amalgamating<sup>62</sup> the viewer's work of attention and the film's content in a close-knitted state of communion in waiting, similar to the sensorial immersion necessary to grasp the voicing of an action still uncertain.

This approach to a notion of conflict, as a performatic space of active waiting, is also present in the film series Drift. Let's take two examples from the series. Drift 16.00 (2002), presents an unspecific seashore being cleaned from crude oil, and Drift 11.00 (2002), a professional cleaner is working up a high building's glass facade. In both films the action apparently does not transform the situation – the sand remains dirty, the window seems already clean. Yet, the workers are using the proper tools and the adequate health and safety gear. They look dignified in their work, a feeling radiating from the calm materiality of their skilful working gestures over the sliding surfaces. There is no claim of wasted effort imposed on the

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<sup>61</sup> Tallentire, Anne. (1999) Instances. London: Lux Gallery.

<sup>62</sup> '[...] a society is defined by its amalgamations, not by its tools [...]' (Deleuze, 1980 p.90).



scene, but this assertion is diminished by the absurdity of the scale in the situation – one person versus large building/long seashore. Again, the ripening time of a tactics of furtherance is brought into the scene as the non-judgmental fine-tuning of the voices humming in uncertainty above and below each scenario.

There is a proximity between this notion of ripening time as a tactic of furtherance, present in the reception of some of Tellentire's work, and the idea put forward by some of my works, on the possible bringing together of opposites into a situation of being *apposite posits* (this meaning, bringing the opposites into a situation of finding a place side-by-side, in a manner that creates a third thing – an ensemble beyond fusion, as all the parts are still able to voice their 'differential truth').

As statements-in-progress [or 'in-pre-gross'<sup>63</sup>] belonging to an inquiry on received conflict, both propositions envelop each other, doing and un-doing a fold that, in placing conflict beyond oppositionality, indeed legitimates it as an instance of difference not to be resolved, but just to be acknowledged and negotiated, over and over again, as the composite of an everyday 'perpetually in preparation'<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> [...] work in progress has come to signal something like a self-contained mode – an institutionalised, all-too-settled genre, a catch-all-figure. As if anticipating this, (James) Joyce planted a variant – work-in-pre-gross- in the thick of his text. The phrase takes us a step back in time to before a work's being is fleshed out, before it has attained its full bulk, mass and weight, to long before notions of gross and net accumulation came to be defined. We step back to the raw scene of emergence, the primordial soup bubbling with hints, hunches, inklings and intimations that are nothing like the final shape they might take. We are pointed to a kind of thinking that's still in an undistilled, rough state, that's perpetually in preparation. (Maharaj, 2000 p.32)

<sup>64</sup> Idem

The non-judgmental approach in framing, found in Tallentire's work, is also present in Francis Alys series of 80 slides titled Sleepers (1999-2001), with images of street dwellers and dogs taken in Mexico City. Alys uses, like I did in the snapshots for the Unattended project and The Reminder, a protective medium plane and the centred figure framing that helps to create a sense of respect emanating from the image. But unlike in The Reminder, he did an extensive series and would show his subject's face, though never in voyeuristic close-up. Yet, there is enough proximity to realise that, despite the awkward situation – in doorways, on benches, on the sun-lit pavement, these protagonists are 'strangely noble, sleeping the sleep of the just' (Heiser, 2004).

Alys' *light touch* shines fully in the diptych from the Sleepers series he contributed to the magazine #5From (2001). As with The Reminder, it is a double shot capturing consecutive moments of a gestural that elucidates the core proposition of a work. Surrounded by a vivid red on the wall and pavement, a dog is presented, firstly, fast asleep, and then, when turning the page, with his eyes recently opened, gazing calmly into the camera. Alys treated the pagination of Sleeper 2000 as if the magazine were an installation site – the turn of the page was his tactic of dispersal generating a gestural that would facilitate the engagement with the work. It worked. With their extreme redness, those two images are whispering that the core of the relationship this work maintain with its subjects – the street dwellers and the dogs, lays in 'a radiant recognition (of) an almost incomprehensible resistance on the part of that which, in them, *does not coincide with the identity of victim*' (Badiou, 1998 p.11).

It seems contradictory to quote Badiou's reflection on 'the identity of victim' as part of a comment on a work that pretends for 'a brief moment the equation of dogs with humans seems like an antidote to the trope of humans being treated like dogs' (Heiser, 2004). In constructing his answer to the question 'Man: Living animal or mortal singularity?', Badiou follows as:

[...] we are dealing with an animal whose resistance, unlike that of a horse, lies not in his fragile body but in his stubborn determination to remain what he is – that is to say, precisely something other than a victim, other than a being-for-death, and thus: something other than a mortal being. (Badiou, 1998 pp.11, 12)

Badiou is reversing the argument forward by this research on the transformative powers of the 'infinite learning' of our mortality. Although I agree with his combative reasoning on resistance and singularity as a matter of ethics belonging outside dubious politics of the 'rights of man', I have reserves on his defence of 'Man's identity as immortal'. Learning our mortality is not to submit to 'the fact that in the end we all die' (Badiou, 1998 p.12), but to inhabit the experience that, as we all die, our becoming is then a work to be continued in the afterwardness of the others' mortality, that is, we are not immortal, we are a species living out of a condition of *continued mortality* – human mortality is not interrupted by death, as much as our death does not interrupts life. And it is our *continued mortality* that interweaves as a common-ground of received conflicts demanding 'affirmative inventions' (Badiou, 1998 p.14), at any scale, even just as a gathering (like Tia Ciata's) or an artwork.

This research definition of installation – it is not a medium, but a non-specific mode of addressing the world as multiplicity,



which will employ any media whatsoever to constitute itself as the presence of a medium specific to a particular artist, this definition frees installation from the necessity of stating itself in oppositionality to painting, sculpture or any other genre that participates on its geneses, as Land art, Happenings, performance, etc. Quite the contrary, the specificities of each medium, instead of being confronted by installation, they will be included in the realm of its addressed multiplicity<sup>65</sup>.

This interruption of the oppositionality between genres, taken as an intrinsic characteristic of installation art, is double-checked from inside what this research states as one of installation's core propositions – that the maker and the viewer are 'parallel competences' engaged in a mutual process of meaning retrieval as 'differential truth', in this case, meaning as a function, not of the authority of a specific voice, but of the ability to respond (a response-ability), exercised by the maker in facing the world, and by the viewer in the face of the work.

For a better understanding of dispersal as installation foundational strategy, this research took the risk of dismissing the traditional genealogical approach. Paradoxically, as an after-effect of the new understanding brought about by the research, when using dispersal as a reading tool, the geneses of installation can be traced back throughout any particular circuit of attention in art, independent of its proximity or distance from the centres of historically dominant social-economic and cultural production. Additionally, facilitating an investigation on the foreigner in art, the conceptualization of the utterable as the carrier of the emotion-value that constitutes the system of relevance in any artwork, would give a way into

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<sup>65</sup> An exemplar demonstration of this effect is to be found in any film-installation.



translation, when approaching the minutiae of practices originated from demands of contexts standing far apart.

That is, the utterable as perceptual 'unnamable'<sup>66</sup>, reverberates in the vicinity of what is kept silent in each culture. This zone of silence (and secrecy) is the mark of difference between cultures, as it is the zone of learning effected through the gestural of the everyday – 'a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society', a continuous flow of actions timed by the forces of 'attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another' (Deleuze, 1980 p.90).

The utterable, working on the fringes of language as code, are a gateway rendering content in-between realms of reception alien to each other. As Badiou explains:

[...] the event is undecidable, but is real, and the unnamable is a negative determination, but the point of the unnamable is a real point. So it's possible that in another process of truth that the point of the unnameable will be in fact name-able. It's not an ontological characteristic to be unnamable, it's relative to the singularity of a truth-process. (Badiou, 2002 p.12]

Inside contexts of cultural encounters, like for instance, international didactic environments, this conceptualization of the utterable as carrier of an emotion-value and as 'unnamable that is relative to the singularity of a truth-process', is a valuable tool.

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<sup>66</sup> [...] the point of the unnamable is the point which if forced to be named destroys the complete field [...] (Badiou, 2002 p.12).

The option to present the practice for this research – the Chance Encounters Portfolio, as an experiential field of interaction, enlisting the viewer-reader as a collaborator, gave some indication on how installation propositions on art making are migrating to contemporary digital practices. The dispersed field of activities in an installation is also a field of retrieval, of samplings and re-workings. Starting from this assumption, an entire decade of film and video installation could be investigated as a single but extensive field of retrieval, oddly assigning to the cinematic the task of being the acid test of reality. As small walking-in centres of attention, any film-installation forwards two of installation's main propositions: a] the incorporation as raw material of the viewer's gestural – the walking about; b] the presentation of a dispersed field, located in the apprehension of the cinematic as *elsewhere*.

The novelty the digital is bringing to film-installation is related to the digital as powerful data-collection tool and its enhanced cut-and-paste devices. The dispersed field, which was installation perceptual novelty, is now sometimes being pressured to morph into a one-to-one map of the world as multiplicity. Is the digital facility for the retrieval and juxtaposition of fragments forcing the field to morph back into a form? This is an initial question demanding further investigation.

For now, the original contribution to knowledge, and how the findings of this research relate to certain questions in the contemporary production, has just been summarized. The writing needs closure but the conversation, on the contrary, needs to be kept open, its work of attention dispersed in afterwardness. A final borrowing then, this time coming from the cinematic as *promise*: To be continued...

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## (Unauthorized) Sampled Films

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Ana Mendieta, Body Tracks (Blood Sign 2), Selected Film Works, 1972-1981 [1974] USA, b&w and colour, 33 min, [Video:VHS];

The American Friend (1976) Win Wenders, Germany/France/US, colour, 150 min [Film: 35mm]

Blue (1993) Derek Jarman, UK, monocrome, 75 min, [Video:VHS].

Chronique d'une été (1961) Jean Rouch & Edgar Morin, France, b&w, 87 min, [Video:VHS];

Cyclo (1995) Tran Anh Hung, Vietnam, colour 130 min, [Video:VHS];

1492: The Conquest of Paradise (1992) Ridley Scott, UK/USA/France/Spain, 154 min, colour [Video: VHS

Jazz, A Masterpiece at Midnight (2001) Ken Burns, USA, b&w+colour, 174 min, [Video:VHS];

Π:Faith in Chaos (1999) Darren Aronofsky, USA, b&w, 80 min, [Video:VHS];

Pierrot le Fou (1965) Jean Luc Godard, France, colour, 106 [Video:VHS];

The Sacrifice (1986) Andrei Tarkovsky, Sweden/France, colour, 142 min [Video:VHS];

Ulysses'Gaze (1995) Theo Angelopoulos, Greece/France, colour, 170 min [Video:VHS];

Vidas Secas (1963) Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Brazil, b&w, 105 min, [Video:VHS];

Vivre sa Vie (1962) Jean Luc Godard, France, b&w, 85 min [Video:VHS];

Weekend (1967) Jean Luc Godard, France, colour, 95 min, [Video:VHS];



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Afterwardness - 'something [an enigmatic message] is proposed by the other, [...] which is then *afterwards* retranslated and reinterpreted.' (Laplanche, 1992b p.222). The concept of afterwardness is proposed and explained by Laplanche (1992b) through the critical analysis of the dream Freud used to introduce the notion of "deferred action" – *Nachtraglichkeit*, which is the psychoanalytic notion the term 'afterwardness' attempts to convey, as a non-interpretative translation.

Autopoetics Closure - a 'system of self-referred operations that recognizes an outside, an environment [able to] be reintroduced into the system in the form of a relationship between self-reference and hetero-reference.' [Luhmann, 1995 p. 11].

Dilation – an alteration or even a shattering of identity, resulting from the irruption of the manifold instances of alterity, which can be experienced either as panic or as release. Experienced as release, the irruption of instances of alterity becomes dilation, but it 'does not efface identity, limitation and enclosure, which always return, in altered forms, as marks of the speaking subject's irreducible difference and separation' (Ahearne. 1995 p. 190).

Dispersal – being installation's defining tactics, dispersal is not a form, but rather a propensity for a displacement of attention, foregrounding the inclusion of an elsewhere, as latent presence in reception.

Emotion-value - as expressed by Barthes (1977), is a concept related to the 'obtuse meaning', in contrast to 'the obvious meaning', which he considers as being 'held in a complete system of destination'. Conversely, he says, 'obtuse meaning appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information. Fortunately, the 'obtuse meaning', though being non representational, still 'carries a certain emotion, an emotion-value, an



evaluation [...] which simply designates what one loves, what one wants to defend'. (Barthes, 1997 p.59).

Field of activities - 'fundamental exchange between site and performance, where [...] the installation of "ghost" architectures seeks to engage with and then activate narratives and properties of a "host" site' (Kaye, 2000 p. 53), creating a kind of 'saturated space' that operates in a 'restless relationship' of multiple viewpoints.

Intervening screen – 'How can the Many become the One? A great screen has to be placed in between them. Like a formless elastic membrane, an electromagnetic field, [...] the screen would extract differentials that could be integrated in ordered perceptions ' (Deleuze, 1988 pp. 76-77).

Multiplicity – '[...] a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements [...] delicate milieu of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities' (Deleuze, 1968 p.50, 192).

Placeevent - developed by the performers of the Welsh company Brith Gof, the concept refers to 'unresolved relationships between various channels of address... a set of relationships which is fluid, as it remains subject to the event of its realisation'. (Kaye, 2000 pp. 53-55)

Re-personalisation - a survival strategy for the enslaved subject of the Black Diaspora in Brazil. Living in between two distinct communities – master and slaves, black and white, this subject is forced to adapt and learn the games and functions that, in the new culture, will provide alternatives of subsistence and reorganization despite a life as slave. (Moura, 1983 p.14).

Self-othering – the concept is by Catherine de Zegher. It reverberates Deleuze. '[...] what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself. '(Deleuze, 1968 pp. 89-90)

Utterable – '[...] a *signaletic material* which includes all kinds of modulation features, sensory (visual and sound), kinetic, intensive, affective, rhythmic, tonal, and even verbal (oral and written). Eisenstein compared them first to ideograms, then, more profoundly, to the internal monologue as proto-language or primitive language system. But, even with its verbal elements, this is neither a language system nor a language. It is a plastic mass, an a-signifying and a-syntactic material, a material not formed linguistically even though it is not amorphous and is formed semiotically, aesthetically and pragmatically. It is a condition anterior by right to what it conditions. It is not an enunciation, and these are not utterances. It is an *utterable*.' (Deleuze, 1985 p.29).